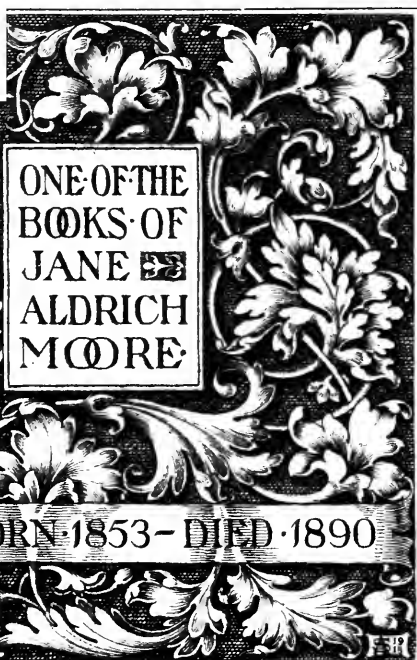




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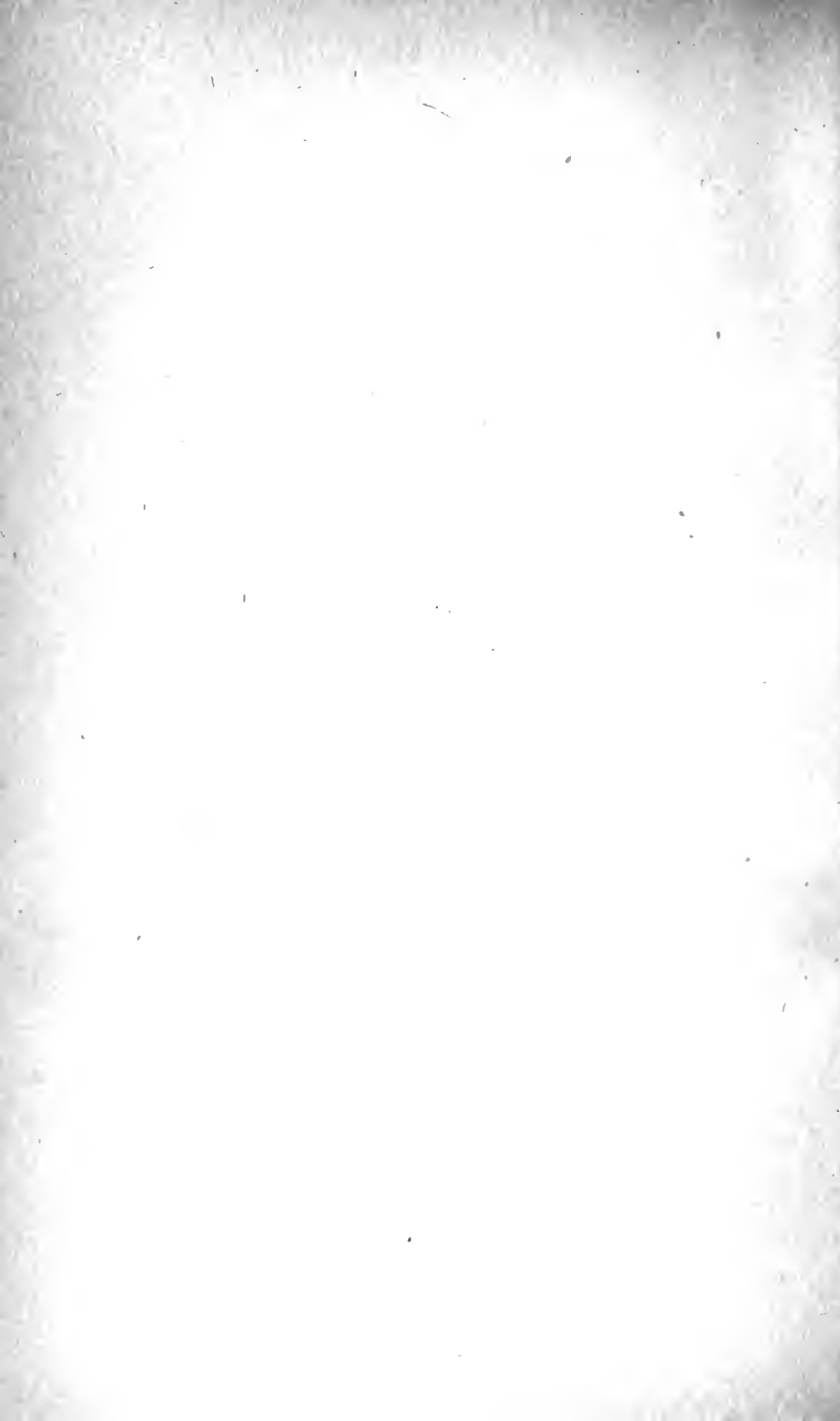
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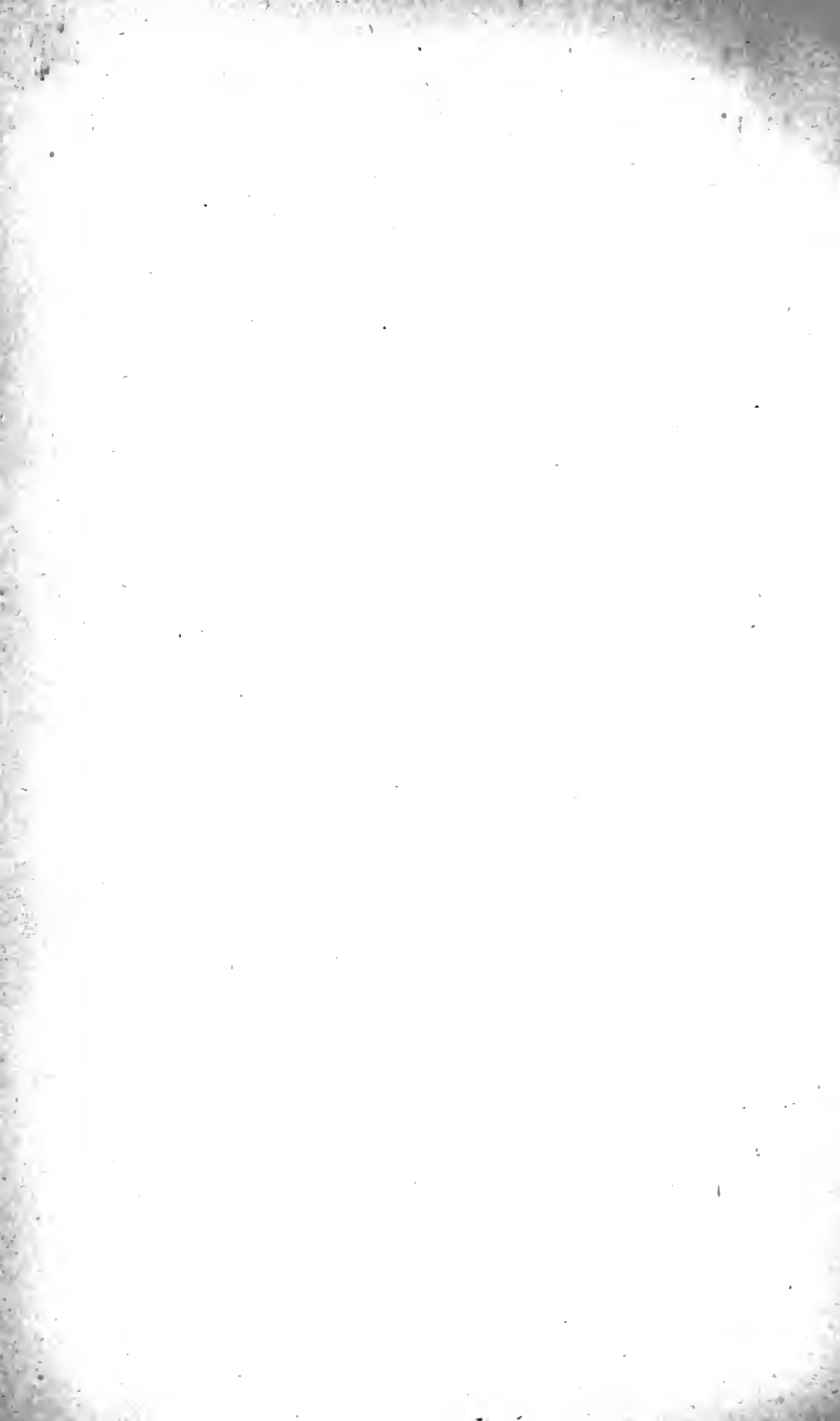
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HENRIETTA TEMPLE.



HENRIETTA TEMPLE,

A Love Story.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "VIVIAN GREY."

"Quoth Sancho, read it out by all means; for I mightily delight
in hearing of Love-stories."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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HENRIETTA TEMPLE.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

WHICH CONTAINS A REMARKABLE CHANGE OF
FORTUNE.

ALTHOUGH Lord Montfort was now the received and recognised admirer of Miss Temple, their intended union was not immediate. Henrietta was herself averse to such an arrangement, but it was not necessary for her to urge this somewhat ungracious desire, as Lord Montfort was anxious that she should be introduced to his family before their marriage, and that the ceremony should be performed in his native country. Their return to England,

therefore, was now meditated. That event was hastened by an extraordinary occurrence.

Good fortune in this world, they say, is seldom single. Mr. Temple at this moment was perfectly content with his destiny. Easy in his own circumstances, with his daughter's future prosperity about to be provided for by an union with the heir to one of the richest peerages in the kingdom, he had nothing to desire. His daughter was happy, he entertained the greatest esteem and affection for his future son-in-law, and the world went well with him in every respect.

It was in this fulness of his happiness that destiny, with its usual wild caprice, resolved "to gild refined gold, and paint the lily;" and it was determined that Mr. Temple should wake one morning among the wealthiest commoners of England.

There happened to be an old Baronet, a great humourist, without any very near relations, who had been a godson of Mr. Temple's grandfather.

He had never invited or encouraged any intimacy or connection with the Temple family, but had always throughout life kept himself aloof from any acquaintance with them. Mr. Temple, indeed, had only seen him once, but certainly under rather advantageous circumstances. It was when Mr. Temple was minister at the German Court, to which we have alluded, that Sir Temple Devereux was a visiter at the capital at which Mr. Temple was Resident. The Minister had shown him some civilities, which was his duty ; and Henrietta had appeared to please him. But he had not remained long at this place ; had refused at the time to be more than their ordinary guest ; and had never, by any letter, message, or other mode of communication, conveyed to them the slightest idea that the hospitable Minister and his charming daughter had dwelt a moment on his memory. And yet Sir Temple Devereux had now departed from the world, where it had apparently been the principal object of his career to avoid ever making

a friend, and had left the whole of his immense fortune to the Right Honourable Pelham Temple, by this bequest proprietor of one of the finest estates in the county of York, and a very considerable personal property, the accumulated savings of a large rental and a long life.

This was a great event. Mr. Temple had the most profound respect for property. It was impossible for the late Baronet to have left his estate to an individual who could more thoroughly appreciate its possession. Even personal property was not without its charms—but a large landed estate, and a large landed estate in the county of York, and that large landed estate in the county of York flanked by a good round sum of three per cent. Consols duly recorded in the Rotunda of Threadneedle-street—it was a combination of wealth, power, consideration, and convenience, which exactly hit the ideal of Mr. Temple, and to the fascination of which I should rather think the taste of few men would be insensible. Mr. Temple being

a man of family, had none of the awkward embarrassments of a parvenu to contend with. "It was the luckiest thing in the world," he would say, "that poor Sir Temple was my grandfather's godson, not only because in all probability it obtained us his fortune, but because he bore the name of Temple; we shall settle down in Yorkshire scarcely as strangers, we shall not be looked upon as a new family, and in a little time the whole affair will be considered rather one of inheritance than bequest. But, after all, what is it to me! It is only for your sake, Digby, that I rejoice. I think it will please your family. I will settle every thing immediately on Henrietta. They shall have the gratification of knowing that their son is about to marry the richest heiress in England."

The richest heiress in England! Henrietta Temple the richest heiress in England! Ah! how many feelings with that thought arise! Strange to say, the announcement of this extra-

ordinary event brought less joy than might have been supposed to the heiress herself.

It was in her chamber and alone, that Henrietta Temple mused over this freak of destiny. It was in vain to conceal it, her thoughts recurred to Ferdinand. They might have been so happy! Why was he not true! And perhaps he had sacrificed himself to his family, perhaps even personal distress had driven him to the fatal deed. Her kind, feminine fancy conjured up every possible extenuation of his dire offence. She grew very sad. She could not believe that he was false at Ducie; oh, no! she never could believe it! He must have been sincere, and if sincere, oh! what a heart was lost there! What would she have not given to have been the means of saving him from all his sorrows! She recalled his occasional melancholy, his desponding words, and how the gloom left his brow and his eye brightened when she fondly prophesied that she would

restore the house. She might restore it now ; and now he was another's, and she—what was she? A slave like him. No longer her own mistress, at the only moment she had the power to save him. Say what they like, there is a pang in balked affection, for which no wealth, power, or place, watchful indulgence or sedulous kindness, can compensate. Ah ! the heart, the heart !

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH THE READER IS AGAIN INTRODUCED
TO CAPTAIN ARMINE, DURING HIS VISIT TO
LONDON.

WE must not forget our friends at Armine Place. Their career was not as eventful as that of the Temple family. Miss Grandison had resolved upon taking a house in London for the season, and had obtained a promise from her uncle and aunt to be her guests. Lady Armine's sister was to join them from Bath. As for Ferdinand, the spring had gradually restored him to health, but not to his former frame of mind. He remained moody and indolent, incapable of exertion, and a prey to the darkest humours; circumstances however occurred, which rendered some energy on his part absolutely

necessary. His creditors grew importunate, and the arrangement of his affairs, or departure from his native land, was an alternative now become inevitable. The month of April, which witnessed the arrival of the Temples and Lord Montfort in England, welcomed also to London Miss Grandison and her guests. A few weeks after, Ferdinand, who had evaded the journey with his family, and who would not on any account become a guest of his cousin, settled himself down at a quiet hotel in the vicinity of Grosvenor Square ; but not quite alone, for almost at the last hour Glastonbury had requested permission to accompany him, and Ferdinand, who duly valued the society of the only person with whom he could converse about his broken fortunes and his blighted hopes without reserve, acceded to his wish with the greatest satisfaction.

A sudden residence in a vast metropolis, after a life of rural seclusion, has without doubt a very peculiar effect upon the mind. The immense

population, the multiplicity of objects, the important interests hourly impressed upon the intelligence, the continually occurring events, the noise, the bustle, the general and widely-spread excitement, all combine to make us keenly sensible of our individual insignificance; and those absorbing passions, that in our solitude, fed by our imagination, have assumed such gigantic and substantial shapes, rapidly subside, by an almost imperceptible process, into less colossal proportions, and seem invested, as it were, with a more shadowy aspect. As Ferdinand Armine jostled his way through the crowded streets of London, urged on by his own harassing and inexorable affairs, and conscious of the impending peril of his career, while power and wealth dazzled his eyes in all directions, he began to look back upon the passionate past with feelings of less keen sensation than heretofore, and almost to regret that a fatal destiny, or his impetuous soul, had entailed upon him so much anxiety, and prompted him to

reject the glittering cup of fortune that had been proffered to him so opportunely. He sighed for enjoyment and repose; the memory of his recent sufferings made him shrink from that reckless indulgence of the passions, of which the consequences had been so severe.

It was in this mood, exhausted by a visit to his lawyer, that he stepped into a military club, of which he was a member, and took up a newspaper. Caring little for politics, his eye wandered over, uninterested, its pugnacious leading articles and tedious parliamentary reports; and he was about to throw it down, when a paragraph caught his notice, which instantly engrossed all his attention. It was in "the Morning Post" that he thus read:—

"The Marquis of Montfort, the eldest son of the Duke of —, whose return to England we recently noticed, has resided for several years in Italy. His Lordship is considered one of the most accomplished noblemen of the day, and was celebrated at Rome for his patronage of the arts. Lord Montfort will shortly be united to the

beautiful Miss Temple, the only daughter of the Right Honourable Pelham Temple. Miss Temple is esteemed one of the richest heiresses in England, as she will doubtless inherit the whole of the immense fortune to which her father so unexpectedly acceded: Mr. Temple is a widower, and has no son. Mr. Temple was formerly our minister at several of the German Courts, where he was distinguished by his abilities, and his hospitality to his travelling countrymen. It is said that the rent roll of the Yorkshire estates of the late Sir Temple Devereux is not less than £15,000 per annum. The personal property also is very considerable. We understand that Mr. Temple has purchased the mansion of the Duke of * * * *, in Grosvenor Square. Lord Montfort accompanied Mr. Temple and his amiable daughter to this country."

What a wild and fiery chaos was the mind of Ferdinand Armine, when he read this paragraph. The wonders it revealed succeeded each other with such rapidity, that for some time he was deprived of the power of reflection. Henrietta Temple in

England!—Henrietta Temple one of the greatest heiresses in the country!—Henrietta Temple about to be immediately married to another! His Henrietta Temple, the Henrietta Temple who had joined her lips to his, whom he adored, and by whom he had been worshipped!—The Henrietta Temple, whose beautiful lock was at this very moment on his heart!—The Henrietta Temple, for whom he had forfeited fortune, family, power, almost life!

O Woman, Woman! Put not thy trust in woman! And yet, could he reproach her? Did she not believe herself trifled with by him, outraged, deceived, deluded, deserted? And did she, could she love another? Was there another, to whom she had poured forth her heart as to him, and all that beautiful flow of fascinating and unrivalled emotion? Was there another, to whom she had pledged her pure and passionate soul? Ah! no; he would not, he could not believe it. Light and false Henrietta could never be. She had been seen, she had

been admired, she had been loved—who that saw her would not admire and love?—and he was the victim of her pique, perhaps of her despair.

But, she was not yet married. They were, according to these lines, to be soon united. It appeared they had travelled together; that thought gave him a pang. Could he not see her? Could he not explain all? Could he not prove his heart had ever been true and fond? Could he not tell her all that had happened, all that he had suffered, all the madness of his misery; and could she resist that voice whose accents had once been her joy, that glance which had once filled her heart with rapture? And, when she found that Ferdinand, her own Ferdinand, had indeed never deceived her, was worthy of her choice affection, and suffering even at this moment for her sweet sake, what were all the cold-blooded ties in which she had since involved herself? She was his, by an older and more ardent bond—should he not claim his right? Could she deny it?

Claim what? The hand of an heiress. Should it be said that an Armine came crouching for lucre, where he ought to have commanded for love? Never! Whatever she might think, his conduct had been faultless to her. It was not for Henrietta to complain. She was not the victim, if one, indeed, there might chance to be. He had loved her, she had returned his passion; for her sake he had made the greatest of sacrifices, forfeited a splendid inheritance, and a fond and faithful heart. When he had thought of her before, pining perhaps in some foreign solitude, he had never ceased reproaching himself for his conduct, and had accused himself of deception and cruelty; but now, in this moment of her flush prosperity, “esteemed one of the richest heiresses in England” (he ground his teeth as he recalled that phrase,) and the affianced bride of a great noble (his old companion, Lord Montfort, too; what a strange thing is life!) proud, smiling, and prosperous, while he was alone, with a broken heart and

worse than desperate fortunes, and all for her sake, his soul became bitter ; he reproached her with want of feeling ; he pictured her as void of genuine sensibility ; he dilated on her indifference since they had parted ; her silence, so strange, now no longer inexplicable ; the total want of interest she had exhibited as to his career ; he sneered at the lightness of her temperament ; he cursed her caprice ; he denounced her infernal treachery ; in the distorted phantom of his agonised imagination, she became to him even an object of hatred.

Poor Ferdinand Armine ! it was the first time he had experienced the maddening pangs of jealousy.

Yet how he had loved this woman ! How he had doted on her ! And now they might have been so happy ! There is nothing that depresses a man so much as the conviction of bad fortune. There seemed, in this sudden return, great fortune, and impending marriage of Henrietta Temple, such a combination, as far as

Ferdinand Armine was concerned, of vexatious circumstances; it would appear that he had been so near perfect happiness and missed it, that he felt quite weary of existence, and seriously meditated depriving himself of it.

It so happened that he had promised this day to dine at his cousin's; for Glastonbury, who was usually his companion, had accepted an invitation this day to dine with the noble widow of his old patron. Ferdinand, however, found himself quite incapable of entering into any society, and he hurried to his hotel to send a note of excuse to Brook-street. As he arrived, Glastonbury was just about to step into a hackney-coach, so that Ferdinand had no opportunity of communicating his sorrows to his friend, even had he been inclined.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH GLASTONBURY MEETS THE VERY
LAST PERSON IN THE WORLD HE EXPECTED,
AND THE STRANGE CONSEQUENCES.

WHEN Glastonbury arrived at the mansion of the good old Duchess, he found nobody in the drawing-room but a young man of very distinguished appearance, whose person was unknown to him, but who, nevertheless, greeted him with remarkable cordiality. The good Glastonbury returned, with some confusion, his warm salutation.

“ It is many years since we last met, Mr. Glastonbury,” said the young man. “ I am not surprised you have forgotten me. I am Lord Montfort ; Digby, perhaps you recollect ? ”

“My dear child! my dear Lord! You have indeed changed! You are a man, and I am a very old one.”

“Nay! my dear Sir, I do assure you I observe little change. Believe me, I have often recalled your image in my long absence, and I find now that my memory has not deceived me.”

Glastonbury and his companion fell into some conversation about his Lordship's travels, and residence at Rome, in the midst of which their hostess entered.

“I have asked you, my dear Sir, to meet our family circle,” said her Grace, “for I do not think I can well ask you to meet any who love you better. It is long since you have seen Digby.”

“Mr. Glastonbury did not recognise me, grandmamma,” said Lord Montfort.

“These sweet children have all grown out of your sight, Mr. Glastonbury,” said the Duchess, “but they are very good. And as for Digby,

I really think he comes to see his poor grandmother every day."

The Duke and Duchess, and two very young daughters, were now announced.

"I was so sorry that I was not at home when you called, Glastonbury," said his Grace, "but I thought I should soon hear of you at grandmamma's."

"And, dear Mr. Glastonbury, why did you not come up and see me?" said the younger Duchess.

"And, dear Mr. Glastonbury, do you remember me?" said one beautiful daughter.

"And me, Mr. Glastonbury, me; I am Isabella."

Blushing, smiling, bowing, constrained from the novelty of his situation, and yet every now and then quite at ease when his ear recalled a familiar voice, dear Mr. Glastonbury was very gratified and very happy. The Duke took him aside, and they were soon engaged in conversation.

“How is Henrietta to-day, Digby?” inquired Isabella. “I left her an hour ago; we have been riding, and expected to meet you all. She will be here immediately.”

There was a knock, and soon the drawing-room door opened, and Miss Temple was announced.

“I must make papa’s apologies,” said Henrietta, advancing and embracing the old Duchess. “I hope he may get here in the evening; but he bade me remind your Grace that your kind invitation was only provisionally accepted.”

“He is quite right,” said the old lady; “and indeed I hardly expected him, for he told me there was a public dinner which he was obliged to attend. I am sure that our dinner is a very private one, indeed,” continued the old lady with a smile. “It is really a family party, though there is one member of the family here whom you do not know, my dear Miss Temple, and whom, I am sure, you will love as much as all of us do. Digby, where is —?”

At this moment dinner was announced. Lord Montfort offered his arm to Henrietta. "There, lead the way," said the old lady; "the girls must beau themselves, for I have no young men to-day for them. I suppose man and wife must be parted, so I must take my son's arm; Mr. Glastonbury, you will hand down the Duchess." But, before Glastonbury's name was mentioned, Henrietta was half-way down stairs.

The Duke and his son presided at the dinner. Henrietta sat on one side of Lord Montfort, his mother on the other. Glastonbury sat on the right hand of the Duke, and opposite their hostess; the two young ladies in the middle. All the guests had been seated without Glastonbury and Henrietta recognising each other; and, as he sat on the same side of the table as Miss Temple, it was not until Lord Montfort asked Mr. Glastonbury to take wine with him that Henrietta heard a name that might well, indeed, turn her pale.

Glastonbury! It never entered into her head

at the moment that it was the Mr. Glastonbury whom she had known. Glastonbury !—what a name ! What dreadful associations did it not induce ! She looked forward—she caught the well-remembered visage—she sunk back in her chair. But Henrietta Temple had a strong mind ; this was surely an occasion to prove it. Mr. Glastonbury's attention was not attracted to her : he knew, indeed, that there was a lady at the table called Henrietta, but he was engrossed with his neighbours, and his eye never caught the daughter of Mr. Temple. It was not until the ladies rose to retire that Mr. Glastonbury beheld that form which he had not forgotten, and looked upon a lady whose name was associated in his memory with the most disastrous and mournful moments of his life. Miss Temple followed the Duchess out of the room, and Glastonbury, perplexed and agitated, resumed his seat.

But Henrietta was the prey of emotions far more acute and distracting. It seemed to her

that she had really been unacquainted with the state of her heart until this sudden apparition of Glastonbury. How his image recalled the past ! She had schooled herself to consider it all a dream ; now it lived before her. Here was one of the principal performers in that fatal tragedy of *Armine*. Glastonbury in the house—under the same roof as she ! Where was Ferdinand ? There was one at hand who could tell her. Was he married ? She had enjoyed no opportunity of ascertaining since her return : she had not dared to ask. Of course he was married ; but was he happy ? And Glastonbury, who, if he did not know all, knew so much—how strange it must be to Glastonbury to meet her ! Dear Glastonbury ! She had not forgotten the days when she so fondly listened to Ferdinand's charming narratives of all his amiable and simple life ! Dear, dear Glastonbury, whom she was so to love ! And she met him now, and did not speak to him, or looked upon him as a stranger ; and he, he would, perhaps, look upon her with pity,

certainly with pain. O ! life—what a heart-breaking thing is life ! And our affections, our sweet and pure affections, fountains of such joy and solace, that nourish all things, and make the most barren and rigid soil teem with life and beauty—oh ! why do we disturb the flow of their sweet waters, and pollute their immaculate and salutary source ! Ferdinand, Ferdinand Armine, why were you false ?

The door opened. Mr. Glastonbury entered, followed by the Duke and his son. Henrietta was sitting in an easy chair—one of Lord Montfort's sisters, seated on an ottoman at her side, held her hand. Henrietta's eye met Glastonbury's ; she bowed to him.

“ How your hand trembles, Henrietta ! ” said the young lady.

Glastonbury approached her with a hesitating step. He blushed faintly—he looked exceedingly perplexed—at length he reached her, and stood before her, and said nothing.

“ You have forgotten me, Mr. Glastonbury,”

said Henrietta; for it was absolutely necessary that some one should break the awkward silence, and she pointed to a chair at her side.

“That would indeed be impossible,” said Glastonbury.

“Oh! you knew Mr. Glastonbury before,” said the young lady. “Grandmamma, only think, Henrietta knew Mr. Glastonbury before.”

“We were neighbours in Nottinghamshire,” said Henrietta in a quick tone.

“Isabella,” said her sister, who was seated at the piano, “the harp awaits you.” Isabella rose, Lord Montfort was approaching Henrietta, when the old duchess called to him.

Henrietta and Glastonbury were alone.

“This is a strange meeting, Mr. Glastonbury,” said Henrietta.

What could poor Glastonbury say! Something he murmured, but not very much to the purpose. “Have you been in Nottinghamshire lately?” said Henrietta.

“I left it about ten days back with”—and

here Glastonbury stopped—"with a friend," he concluded.

"I trust all your friends are well," said Henrietta, in a tremulous voice.

"No—yes—that is," said Glastonbury, "something better than they were."

"I am sorry that my father is not here," said Miss Temple; "he has a lively remembrance of all your kindness."

"Kindness I fear," said Glastonbury, in a melancholy tone, "that was most unfortunate."

"We do not deem it so, Sir," was the reply.

"My dear young lady," said Glastonbury, but his voice faltered as he added, "we have had great unhappiness."

"I regret it," said Henrietta; "you had a marriage, I believe, expected in your family?"

"It has not occurred," said Glastonbury.

"Indeed!"

"Alas! madam," said her companion, "if I might venture indeed to speak of one whom I will not name, and yet ——"

“ Pray speak, sir,” said Miss Temple, in a kind, yet hushed voice.

“ The child of our affections, madam, is not what he was. God, in his infinite mercy, has visited him with great afflictions.”

“ You speak of Captain Armine, sir ? ”

“ I speak, indeed, of my broken-hearted Ferdinand ; I would I could say yours. O ! Miss Temple, he is a wreck.”

“ Yes ! yes ! ” said Henrietta in a low tone.

“ What he has endured,” continued Glastonbury, “ passes all description of mine. His life has indeed been spared, but under circumstances that almost make me regret he lives.”

“ He has not married ! ” muttered Henrietta.

“ He came to Ducie to claim his bride, and she was gone,” said Glastonbury ; “ his mind sunk under the terrible bereavement. For weeks he was a maniac ; and, though Providence spared him again to us, and his mind, thanks to God, is again whole, he is the victim of a profound melancholy, that seems to defy alike medical skill and worldly vicissitude.”

“Digby, Digby!” exclaimed Isabella, who was at the harp, “Henrietta is fainting.” Lord Montfort rushed forward just in time to seize her cold hand.

“The room is too hot,” said one sister.

“The coffee is too strong,” said the other.

“Air,” said the young Duchess.

Lord Montfort carried Henrietta into a distant room. There was a balcony opening into a garden. He seated her on a bench, and never quitted her side, but contrived to prevent any one approaching her. The women clustered together.

“Sweet creature!” said the old Duchess, “she often makes me tremble; she has but just recovered, Mr. Glastonbury, from a long and terrible illness.”

“Indeed!” said Glastonbury.

“Poor dear Digby,” continued her Grace, “this will quite upset him again. He was in such spirits about her health the other day.”

“Lord Montfort?” inquired Glastonbury.

“ Our Digby. You know that he is to be married to Henrietta next month.”

“ Holy Virgin ! ” muttered Glastonbury ; and, taking up Lord Montfort’s hat by mistake, he seized advantage of the confusion, and effected his escape.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH MR. GLASTONBURY INFORMS CAPTAIN
ARMINE OF HIS MEETING WITH MISS TEMPLE.

It was still an early hour when Mr. Glastonbury arrived at his hotel. He understood, however, that Captain Armine had already returned and retired. Glastonbury knocked gently at his door, and was invited to enter. The good man was pale and agitated. Ferdinand was already in bed. Glastonbury took a chair and seated himself by his side.

“My dear friend, what is the matter?” said Ferdinand.

“I have seen her—I have seen her,” said Glastonbury.

“Henrietta ! seen Henrietta !” inquired Ferdinand.

Glastonbury nodded assent, but with a most rueful expression of countenance.

“What has happened? what did she say?” asked Ferdinand in a quick voice.

“You are two innocent lambs,” said Glastonbury, wringing his hands.

“Speak—speak, my Glastonbury.”

“I wish that my death could make you both happy,” said Glastonbury; “but I fear that would do you no good.”

“Is there any hope?” said Ferdinand.

“None,” said Glastonbury. “Prepare yourself, my dear child, for the worst.”

“Is she married?” inquired Ferdinand.

“No; but she is going to be.”

“I know it,” said Ferdinand.

Glastonbury stared.

“You know it? what, to Digby?”

“Digby, or whatever his name may be; damn him.”

“Hush! hush!” said Glastonbury.

“May all the curses ——”

“God forbid,” said Glastonbury, interrupting him.

“Unfeeling, fickle, false, treacherous ——.”

“She is an angel,” said Glastonbury, “a very angel. She has fainted, and nearly in my arms.”

“Fainted! nearly in your arms! Oh! tell me all, tell me all, Glastonbury,” exclaimed Ferdinand, starting up in his bed with an eager voice and sparkling eyes. “Does she love me?”

“I fear so,” said Glastonbury.

“Fear!”

“Oh! how I pity her poor innocent heart,” said Glastonbury.

“When I told her of all your sufferings——”

“Did you tell her! What then?”

“And she herself has barely recovered from a long and terrible illness.”

“My own Henrietta! Now I could die happy,” said Ferdinand.

“I thought it would break your heart,” said Glastonbury.

“It is the only happy moment I have known for months,” said Ferdinand.

I was so overwhelmed that I lost my presence of mind,” said Glastonbury. “I really never meant to tell you anything. I do not know how I came into your room.”

“Dear, dear Glastonbury, I am myself again!”

“Only think,” said Glastonbury, “I never was so unhappy in my life.”

“I have endured for the last four hours the tortures of the damned,” said Ferdinand, “to think that she was going to be married, to be married to another, that she was happy, proud, prosperous, totally regardless of me, perhaps utterly forgetful of the past, and that I was dying like a dog in this cursed caravanserai—O! Glastonbury, nothing that I have ever endured has been equal to the hell of this day! And now you have come and made me comparatively happy. I shall get up directly.”

Glastonbury looked quite astonished; he

could not comprehend how his fatal intelligence could have produced effects so directly contrary to those he had anticipated. However, in answer to Ferdinand's reiterated inquiries, he contrived to give a detailed account of every thing that had occurred, and Ferdinand's running commentary continued to be one of constant self-congratulation.

"There is however one misfortune," said Ferdinand, "with which you are unacquainted, my dear friend."

"Indeed!" said Glastonbury, "I thought I knew enough."

"Alas! she has become a great heiress!"

"Is that it?" said Glastonbury.

"'Tis the devil," said Ferdinand. "Were it not for that, by the soul of my grandfather, I would tear her from the arms of this stripling!"

"Stripling!" said Glastonbury. "I never saw a truer nobleman in my life."

"The deuse," said Ferdinand.

"Nay! second scarcely to yourself. I could

not believe my eyes," continued Glastonbury. "He was but a child when I saw him last, but so were you, Ferdinand. Believe me, he is no ordinary rival."

"Goodlooking!"

"Altogether of a most princely presence. I have rarely met a personage so highly accomplished, or who more quickly impressed you with his moral and intellectual excellence."

"And they are positively engaged?"

"To be married next month," replied Glastonbury.

"O! Glastonbury, why do I live!" exclaimed Ferdinand, "why did I recover!"

"My dear child, but just now you were comparatively happy."

"Happy! you cannot mean to insult me. Happy! Oh! is there in this world, a thing so deplorable as I am!"

"I thought I did wrong to say anything," said Glastonbury, speaking as it were to himself, "I have got my wrong hat too!"

Ferdinand made no observation. He turned himself in his bed, with his face averted from Glastonbury.

“Good night,” said Glastonbury, after remaining some time in silence.

“Good night,” said Ferdinand, in a faint and mournful tone.

CHAPTER V.

WHICH, ON THE WHOLE, IS PERHAPS AS REMARKABLE A CHAPTER AS ANY IN THE WORK.

WRETCHED as he was, the harsh business of life could not be neglected; Captain Armine was obliged to be in Lincoln's Inn by ten o'clock the next morning. It was on his return from his lawyer, as he was about to cross Berkeley Square, that a carriage suddenly stopped in the middle of the road, and a female hand apparently beckoned to him from the window. He was at first very doubtful, whether he were indeed the person to whom the signal was addressed, but as on looking around, there was not a single human being in sight, he at length slowly approached the equipage, from which a

white handkerchief now waved with considerable agitation. Somewhat perplexed by this incident, the mystery was, however, immediately explained by the voice of Lady Bellair.

“ You wicked man,” said her little ladyship, in a great rage. “ Oh ! how I hate you ! I could cut you into minced meat ; that I could. Here I have been giving parties every night, all for you too. And you have been in town never called on me. Tell me your name. How is your wife ? Oh ! you are not married. You should marry ; I hate a *cidevant jeune homme*. However, you can wait a little. Here, James, Thomas, Peter, what is your name, open the door and let him in. There get in, get in ; I have a great deal to say to you.” And Ferdinand found that it was absolutely necessary to comply.

“ Now, where shall we go ? ” said her ladyship ; “ I have got till two o’clock. I make it a rule to be at home every day from two till six, to receive my friends. You must come and call upon me. You may come every day if you like. Do not leave your card. I hate people

who leave cards. I never see them ; I order all to be burnt. I cannot bear people who leave bits of paper at my house.—Do you want to go anywhere?—You do not !—Why do not you ? How is your worthy father Sir Peter?—Is his name Sir Peter or Sir Paul?—Well, never mind ; you know who I mean.—And your charming mother, my favourite friend?—She is charming ; she is quite one of my favourites.—And were not you to marry?—Tell me, why have you not?—Miss—Miss—you know whom I mean, whose grandfather was my son's friend. In town are they?—Where do they live?—Brook Street !—I will go and call upon them.—There, pull the string, and tell him where they live.”

And so, in a few minutes, Lady Bellair's carriage stopped opposite the house of Miss Grandison.

“Are they early risers?” said her ladyship ; “I get up every morning at six. I dare say they will not receive me ; but do you show yourself, and then they cannot refuse.”

In consequence of this diplomatic movement, Lady Bellair effected an entrance. Leaning on the arm of Ferdinand, her ladyship was ushered into the morning-room, where she found Lady Armine and Katherine.

“My dear lady, how do you do? And my sweet miss!—Oh! your eyes are so bright, that it quite makes me young to look upon them!—I quite love you, that I do.—Your grandfather and my poor son were bosom friends.—And, my dear lady, where have you been all this time? Here have I been giving parties every night, and all for you; all for my Bath friends; telling everybody about you; talking of nothing else; everybody longing to see you; and you have never been near me. My dinner-parties are over; I shall not give any more dinners until June. But I have three evenings yet; to-night you must come to me to-night, and Thursday, and Saturday; you must come on all three nights.—Oh! why did you not call upon me?—I should have asked you to dinner.—I would

have asked you to meet Lord Colonnade and Lady Ionia!—They would have just suited you; they would have tasted you!—But I tell you what I will do; I will come and dine with you some day.—Now, when will you have me?—Let me see, when am I free?” So saying, her ladyship opened a little red book, which was her inseparable companion in London. “All this week I am ticketed; Monday, the Derricourts—dull, but then he is a Duke. Tuesday I dine with Bonmot; we have made it up; he gives me a dinner. Wednesday—Wednesday—where is Wednesday?—General Faneville, my own party. Thursday, the Maxburys—bad dinner, but good company. Friday, Waring Cutts—a famous house for eating; but that is not in my way; however, I must go, for he sends me pines. And Saturday I dine off a rabbit, by myself, at one o’clock, to go and see my dear, darling Lady St. Julian at Richmond. So it cannot be this or next week. I will send you a note; I will tell you to-night. And now

I must go, for it is five minutes to two—I am always at home from two to six—I receive my friends—You may come every day—and you must come to see my new squirrel ; my darling, funny, little grandson gave it me—And, my dear miss, where is that wicked Lady Grandison?—Do you ever see her, or are you enemies?—She has got the estate, has not she?—She never calls upon me—Tell her she is one of my greatest favourites—Oh! why does not she come?—I should have asked her to dinner ; and now all my dinners are over till June. Tell me where she lives, and I will call upon her to-morrow.”

So saying, and bidding them all farewell very cordially, her ladyship took Ferdinand’s arm and retired.

Captain Armine returned to his mother and cousin, and sat an hour with them, until their carriage was announced. Just as he was going away, he observed Lady Bellair’s little red book, which she had left behind.

“ Poor Lady Bellair ! what will she do ! ”

said Miss Grandison; "We must take it to her immediately."

"I will leave it," said Ferdinand, "I shall pass her house."

Bellair House was the prettiest mansion in May Fair. It was a long building, in the Italian style, situate in the midst of gardens, which, though not very extensive, were laid out with so much art and taste, that it was very difficult to believe that you were in a great city. The house was furnished and adorned with all that taste for which Lady Bellair was distinguished. All the receiving-rooms were on the ground floor, and were all connected. Ferdinand, who remembered Lady Bellair's injunctions not to leave cards, attracted by the spot, and not knowing what to do with himself, determined to pay her ladyship a visit, and was ushered into an octagon library, lined with well-laden dwarf-cases of brilliant volumes, crowned with no lack of marble busts, bronzes, and Etruscan vases. On each side opened a magnificent saloon, furnished in that

classic style which the late accomplished and ingenious Mr. Hope first rendered popular in this country. The wings, projecting far into the gardens, comprised respectively a dining-room and a conservatory of considerable dimensions. Isolated in the midst of the gardens was a long building, called the summer-room, lined with Indian matting, and screened on one side from the air merely by Venetian blinds. The walls of this chamber were almost entirely covered with caricatures and prints of the country seats of Lady Bellair's friends, all of which she took care to visit. Here also were her parrots, and some birds of a sweeter voice, a monkey, and the famous squirrel.

Lady Bellair was seated in a chair, the back of which was much higher than her head ; at her side was a little table with writing materials, and on which also was placed a magnificent bell, by Benvenuto Cellini, with which her ladyship summoned her page, who, in the meantime, loitered in the hall.

“ You have brought me my book ! ” she exclaimed, as Ferdinand entered with the mystical volume. “ Give it me—give it me. Here I cannot tell Mrs. Fancourt what day I can dine with her. I am engaged all this week and all next, and I am to dine with your dear family when I like. But Mrs. Fancourt must choose her day, because they will keep. You do not know this gentleman,” she said, turning to Mrs. Fancourt. “ Well, I shall not introduce you ; he will not suit you ; he is a fine gentleman, and only dines with dukes.”

Mrs. Fancourt consequently looked very anxious for an introduction.

“ General Faneville,” Lady Bellair continued to a gentleman on her left, “ what day do I dine with you ? Wednesday. Is our party full ? You must make room for him ; he is my greatest favourite. All the ladies are in love with him.”

General Faneville expressed his deep sense of the high honour ; Ferdinand protested he was engaged on Wednesday ; Mrs. Fancourt looked

very disappointed that she had thus lost another opportunity of learning the name of so distinguished a personage.

There was another knock. Mrs. Fancourt departed. Lady Maxbury, and her daughter Lady Selina, were announced.

“Have you got him?” asked Lady Bellair very eagerly, as her new visitors entered.

“He has promised most positively,” answered Lady Maxbury.

“Dear, good creature!” exclaimed Lady Bellair, “you are the dearest creature that I know! And you are charming,” she continued, addressing herself to Lady Selina; “if I were a man, I would marry you directly. There now, he (turning to Ferdinand) cannot marry you, because he is married already; but he should, if he were not. And how will he come?” inquired Lady Bellair.

“He will find his way,” said Lady Maxbury.

“And I am not to pay anything?” inquired Lady Bellair.

“Not any thing,” said Lady Maxbury.

“I cannot bear paying,” said Lady Bellair.

“But will he dance, and will he bring his bows and arrows? Lord Dorfield protests ’tis nothing without the bows and arrows.”

“What, the New Zealand chief, Lady Bellair?” inquired the General.

“Have you seen him?” inquired Lady Bellair, eagerly.

“Not yet,” replied the gentleman.

“Well then, you will see him to-night,” said Lady Bellair, with an air of triumph. “He is coming to me to night.”

Ferdinand rose, and was about to depart.

“You must not go without seeing my squirrel,” said her ladyship, “that my dear funny grandson gave me—he is such a funny boy! You must see it, you must see it,” added her ladyship, in a peremptory tone. “There, go out of that door; and you will find your way to my summer room, and there you will find my squirrel.”

The restless Ferdinand was content to quit the library, even with the stipulation of first visiting the squirrel. He walked through a saloon, entered the conservatory, emerged into the garden, and at length found himself in the long summer room. At the end of the room a lady was seated looking over a book of prints; as she heard a footstep she raised her eyes, and the thunderstruck Ferdinand beheld —— Henrietta Temple !

He was literally speechless ; he felt rooted to the ground ; all power of thought and motion alike deserted him. There he stood confounded and aghast. Nor indeed was his companion less disturbed. She remained with her eyes fixed on Ferdinand, with an expression of fear, astonishment, and distress impressed upon her features. At length Ferdinand in some degree rallied, and he followed the first impulse of his mind—when mind indeed returned to him—he moved to retire.

He had retraced half his steps, when a voice,

if human voice indeed it were that sent forth tones so full of choking anguish, pronounced his name.

“ Captain Armine ! ” said the voice.

How he trembled, yet mechanically obedient to his first impulse, he still proceeded to the door.

“ Ferdinand ! ” said the voice.

He stopped, he turned, she waved her hand wildly, and then leaning her arm on the table, buried her face in it. Ferdinand walked to the table at which she was sitting; she heard his footstep near her, yet she neither looked up nor spoke. At length he said in a still yet clear voice, “ I am here.”

“ I have seen Mr. Glastonbury,” she muttered.

“ I know it,” he replied.

“ Your illness has distressed me,” she said, after a slight pause, her face still concealed, and speaking in a very hushed tone. Ferdinand made no reply: and there was another pause, which Miss Temple broke.

"I would that we were at least friends," she said. The tears came into Ferdinand's eyes when she said this, for her tone, though low, was now sweet. It touched his heart.

"Our mutual feelings now are of little consequence," he replied.

She sighed, but made no reply. At length Ferdinand said, "Farewell, Miss Temple."

She started, she looked up, her mournful countenance harrowed his heart. He knew not what to do; what to say. He could not bear her glance, he in his turn averted his eyes.

"Our misery is — has been great," she said in a firmer tone, "but was it of my making?"

"The miserable can bear reproaches: do not spare me—my situation however proves my sincerity. I have erred certainly," said Ferdinand, "I could not believe that you could have doubted me. It was a mistake," he added, in a tone of great bitterness.

Miss Temple again covered her face, as she said, "I cannot recal the past: I wish not to

dwell on it. I desire only to express to you the interest I take in your welfare, my hope that you may yet be happy. Yes! you can be happy, Ferdinand—Ferdinand, for my sake you will be happy.”

“O! Henrietta, if Henrietta I indeed may call you, this is worse than that death I curse myself for having escaped.”

“No, Ferdinand, say not that. Exert yourself, only exert yourself, bear up against irresistible fate. Your cousin—every one says she is so amiable—surely ——.”

“Farewell, Madam, I thank you for your counsel.”

“No, Ferdinand, you shall not go, you shall not go, in anger. Pardon me, pity me, I spoke for your sake, I spoke for the best.”

“I, at least, will never be false,” said Ferdinand with energy. “It shall not be said of me, that I broke vows consecrated by the finest emotions of our nature. No, no, I have had my dream; it was but a dream; but while I live, I will live upon its sweet memory.”

“Ah! Ferdinand, why were you not frank, why did you conceal your situation from me?”

“No explanation of mine can change our respective situations,” said Ferdinand; “I content myself therefore by saying, that it was not Miss Temple who had occasion to criticise my conduct.”

“You are very bitter.”

“The lady whom I injured, pardoned me. She is the most generous, the most amiable of her sex; if only in gratitude for all her surpassing goodness, I would never affect to offer her a heart which never can be hers. Katherine is indeed more than woman. Amid my many and almost unparalleled sorrows, one of my keenest pangs is the recollection that I should have clouded the life, even for a moment, of that admirable person. Alas! alas! that in all my misery, the only woman who sympathises with my wretchedness, is the woman whom I have injured. And so delicate as well as so generous! She would not even inquire the name of the indi-

vidual who had occasioned our mutual desolation.”

“Would that she knew all!” murmured Henrietta, “would that I knew her!”

“Your acquaintance could not influence affairs. My very affection for my cousin, the complete appreciation which I now possess of her character, before so little estimated and so feebly comprehended by me, is the very circumstance, that, with my feelings, would prevent our union. She may—I am confident she will yet, be happy. I can never make her so. Our engagement in old days was rather the result of family arrangements than of any sympathy. I love her far better now than I did then, and yet she is the very last person in the world that I would marry. I trust, I believe that my conduct, if it have clouded for a moment her life, will not ultimately, will not long obscure it; and she has every charm and virtue, and accident of fortune, to attract the admiration and attention of the most favoured. Her feelings towards me at any

time could have been but mild and calm. It is a mere abuse of terms to style such sentiments love. But," added he, sarcastically, "this is too delicate a subject for me to dilate on to Miss Temple."

"For God's sake do not be so bitter," she exclaimed; and then she added, in a voice half of anguish, half of tenderness, "Let me never be taunted by those lips! O! Ferdinand, why cannot we be friends?"

"Because we are more than friends. To me such a word from your lips is mere mockery. Let us never meet. That alone remains for us. Little did I suppose that we ever should have met again. I go no where—I enter no single house; my visit here this morning was one of those whimsical vagaries which cannot be counted on. This old lady, indeed, seems, somehow or other, connected with our destiny. I believe I am greatly indebted to her?"

The page entered the room. "Miss Temple," said the lad, "my lady bid me say the Duchess and Lord Montfort were here."

Ferdinand started—and darting, almost unconsciously, a glance of fierce reproach at the miserable Henrietta, he rushed out of the room, and made his escape from Bellair House without re-entering the library.

CHAPTER VI.

CONTAINING AN EVENING ASSEMBLY AT
BELLAIR HOUSE.

SEATED on an ottoman in the octagon library, occasionally throwing a glance at her illuminated and crowded saloons, or beckoning, with a fan almost as long as herself, to a distant guest, Lady Bellair received the world on the evening of the day that had witnessed the strange rencontre between Henrietta Temple and Ferdinand Armine. Her page, who stood at the library-door in a new fancy dress, received the announcement of the company from the other servants, and himself communicated the information to his mistress.

“Mr. Million de Stockville, my lady,” said the page.

“ Hem ! ” said her ladyship, rather gruffly, as, with no very amiable expression of countenance, she bowed, with her haughtiest dignity, to a rather common-looking personage in a very gorgeously embroidered waistcoat.

“ Lady Ionia Colonnade, my lady.”

Lady Bellair bestowed a smiling nod on this fair and classic dame, and even indicated, by a movement of her fan, that she might take a seat on her ottoman.

“ Sir Ratcliffe and Lady Armine, my lady, and Miss Grandison.”

“ Dear, good people ! ” exclaimed Lady Bellair, “ how late you are ! and where is your wicked son ? There, go into the next room, go, go, and see the wonderful man. Lady Ionia, you must know Lady Armine ; she is like you ; she is one of my favourites. Now then, there all of you go together. I will not have anybody stay here, except my niece. This is my niece,” Lady Bellair added, pointing to a very young lady seated by her side ; “ I give this party for her.”

“General Faneville, my lady.”

“You are very late,” said Lady Bellair.

“I dined at Lord Rochfort’s,” said the General, bowing.

“Rochfort’s! Oh! where are they?—where are the Rochforts? they ought to be here. I must—I will see them. Do you think Lady Rochfort wants a nursery governess? Because I have a charming person who would just suit her. Go and find her out, General, and inquire; and if she do not want one, find out some one who does. Ask Lady Maxbury. There, go—go.”

“Mr. and Miss Temple, my lady.”

“Oh! my darling!” said Lady Bellair, “my real darling! sit by me. I sent Lady Ionia away, because I determined to keep this place for you. I give this party entirely in your honour, so you ought to sit here. You are a good man,” she continued, addressing Mr. Temple; “but I can’t love you as well as your daughter.”

“I should be too fortunate,” said Mr. Temple, smiling.

“I knew you when you eat pap,” said Lady Bellair, laughing.

“Mrs. Montgomery Floyd, my lady.”

Lady Bellair assumed her coldest and haughtiest glance. Mrs. Montgomery appeared more gorgeous than ever. The splendour of her sweeping train almost required a page to support it; she held a bouquet which might have served for the centre-piece of a dinner-table. A slender youth, rather distinguished in appearance, simply dressed, with a rose-bud just twisted into his black coat, but whose person distilled odours whose essence might have exhausted a conservatory, lounged at her side.

“May I have the honour to present to your ladyship Lord Catchimwhocan,” breathed forth Mrs. Montgomery, exulting in her companion, perhaps in her conquest.

Lady Bellair gave a short and ungracious nod. Mrs. Montgomery recognised Mr. and Miss Temple. “There, go, go,” said Lady Bellair, interrupting her, “nobody must stop here; go and see the wonderful man in the next room.”

“ Lady Bellair is so strange,” whimpered Mrs. Montgomery in an apologetical whisper to Miss Temple, and she moved away, covering her retreat by the graceful person of Lord Catchimwhocan.

“ Some Irish guardsman, I suppose,” said Lady Bellair. “ I never heard of him ; I hate guardsmen.”

“ Rather a distinguished-looking man, I think,” said Mr. Temple.

“ Do you think so ! ” said Lady Bellair, who was always influenced by the last word. “ I will ask him for Thursday and Saturday. I think I must have known his grandfather. I must tell him not to go about with that horrid woman. She is so very fine, and she uses musk ; she puts me in mind of the Queen of Sheba,” said the little lady, laughing, “ all precious stones and frankincense. I quite hate her.”

“ I thought she was quite one of your favourites, Lady Bellair ? ” said Henrietta Temple, rather maliciously.

“ A Bath favourite, my dear, a Bath favourite. I wear my old bonnets at Bath, and use my new friends ; but in town I have old friends and new dresses.”

“ Lady Frederick Berrington, my lady.”

“ Oh ! my dear lady Frederick, now I will give you a treat. I will introduce you to my sweet, sweet friend, whom I am always talking to you of. You deserve to know her ; you will taste her ; there, sit down, sit by her, and talk to her, and make love to her.”

“ Lady Womandeville, my lady.”

“ Ah ! she will do for the lord—she loves a lord. My dear lady, you come so late, and yet I am always so glad to see you. I have such a charming friend for you, the handsomest, most fashionable, witty person, quite captivating, and his grandfather was one of my dearest friends. What is his name? what is his name? Lord Catchimwhocan. Mind, I introduce you to him, and ask him to your house very often.”

Lady Womandeville smiled, expressed her delight, and moved on.

Lord Montfort, who had arrived before the Temples, approached the ottoman.

“Is the Duchess here?” inquired Henrietta, as she shook hands with him.

“And Isabella,” he replied. Henrietta rose, and taking his arm, bid adieu to Lady Bellair.

“God bless you,” said her ladyship, with great emphasis. “I will not have you speak to that odious Mrs. Floyd, mind.”

When Lord Montfort and Henrietta succeeded in discovering the Duchess, she was in the conservatory, which was gaily illuminated with coloured lamps among the shrubs. Her Grace was conversing with great cordiality with a lady of very prepossessing appearance, and in whom the traces of a beauty once distinguished were indeed still considerable, and her companion, an extremely pretty person, in the very bloom of girlhood. Lord Montfort and Henrietta were immediately introduced to these ladies, as Lady Armine and Miss Grandison. After the scene of the morning, it was not very

easy to deprive Miss Temple of her equanimity ; after that shock, indeed, no incident connected with the Armine family could be very surprising ; she was even desirous of becoming acquainted with Miss Grandison, and she congratulated herself upon the opportunity which had so speedily offered itself to gratify her wishes. The Duchess was perfectly delighted with Lady Armine, whose manners, indeed, were very fascinating ; between the families there was some distant connexion of blood, and Lady Armine, too, had always retained a lively sense of the old Duke's services to her son. Henrietta had even to listen to inquiries made after Ferdinand, and she learnt that he was slowly recovering from an almost fatal illness, that he could not yet endure the fatigues of society, and that he was even living at an hotel for the sake of quiet. Henrietta watched the countenance of Katherine, as Lady Armine gave this information. It was serious, but not disturbed. Her Grace did not separate from her new friends the

whole of the evening, and they parted with a mutually expressed wish that they might speedily and often meet. The Duchess pronounced Lady Armine the most charming person she had ever met, while, on the other hand, Miss Grandison was warm in her admiration of Henrietta Temple and Lord Montfort, whom she thought quite worthy even of so rare a prize.

CHAPTER VII.

CONTAINING A VERY IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION.

BETWEEN the unexpected meeting with Captain Armine in the morning, and the evening assembly at Ballair House, a communication had been made by Miss Temple to Lord Montfort, which ought not to be quite unnoticed. She had returned home with his mother and himself, and her silence and depression had not escaped him. Soon after their arrival they were left alone, and then Henrietta said, “ Digby, I wish to speak to you ! ”

“ My own ! ” said Lord Montfort, as he seated himself by her on the sofa, and took her hand.

Miss Temple was calm, but he would have

been a light observer, who had not detected her suppressed agitation.

“Dearest Digby,” she continued, “you are so generous and so kind, that I ought to feel no reluctance in speaking to you upon this subject; and yet it pains me very much.” She hesitated—

“I can only express my sympathy with any sorrow of yours, Henrietta,” said Lord Montfort. “Speak to me as you always do, with that frankness which so much delights me.”

“Let your thoughts recur to the most painful incident of my life, then,” said Henrietta.

“If you require it,” said Lord Montfort, in a serious tone.

“It is not my fault, dearest Digby, that a single circumstance connected with that unhappy event should be unknown to you. I wished originally that you should know all. I have a thousand times since regretted that your consideration for my feelings should ever have occasioned an imperfect confidence between us; and

something has occurred to-day, which makes me lament it most bitterly."

"No, no, dearest Henrietta; you feel too keenly," said Lord Montfort.

"Indeed, Digby, it is so," said Henrietta, very mournfully.

"Speak, then, dearest Henrietta."

"It is necessary that you should know the name of that person who once exercised an influence over my feelings, which I never affected to disguise to you."

"Is it indeed necessary?" inquired Lord Montfort.

"It is for my happiness," replied Henrietta.

"Then, indeed, I am anxious to learn it."

"He is in this country," said Henrietta, "he is in this town; he may be in the same room with you to-morrow; he has been in the same room with me even this day."

"Indeed!" said Lord Montfort.

"He bears a name not unknown to you," said Henrietta, "a name, too, that I must teach myself to mention, and yet——"

Lord Montfort rose and took a pencil and a sheet of paper from the table, "Write it," he said in a most kind tone.

Henrietta took the pencil, and wrote—

"ARMINE."

"The son of Sir Ratcliffe?" said Lord Montfort.

"The same," replied Henrietta.

"You heard then of him last night?" inquired her companion.

"Even so; of that, too, I was about to speak."

"I am aware of the connection of Mr. Glastonbury with the Armine family," said Lord Montfort, very quietly.

There was a dead pause. At length Lord Montfort said, "Is there anything you wish me to do?"

"Much," said Henrietta. "Dearest Digby," she continued, after a moment's hesitation, "do not misinterpret me; my heart, if such a heart be indeed worth possessing, is yours. I can

never forget who solaced me in all my misery ; I can never forget all your delicate tenderness, my Digby. Would that I could make a return to you more worthy of all your goodness ; but, if the grateful devotion of my life can repay you, you shall be satisfied."

He took her hand and pressed it to his lips. "It is of you, and of your happiness, that I can alone think," he murmured.

"Now, let me tell you all," said Henrietta, with desperate firmness. "I have done this person great injustice."

"Hah ! " said Lord Montfort.

"It cuts me to the heart," said Henrietta.

"You have then misconceived his conduct ?" inquired Lord Montfort.

"Utterly."

"It is indeed a terrible situation for you," said Lord Montfort ; "for all of us," he added, in a lower tone.

"No, Digby ; not for all of us ; not even for myself ; for, if you are happy, I will be.

But for him—yes ! I will not conceal it from you—I feel for him.”

“Your destiny is in your own hands, Henrietta.”

“No, no, Digby; do not say so,” exclaimed Miss Temple, very earnestly; “do not speak in that tone of sacrifice. There is no need of sacrifice; there shall be none. I will not—I do not falter. Be you firm. Do not desert me in this moment of trial. It is for support I speak; it is for consolation. We are bound together by ties the purest, the holiest. Who shall sever them? No! Digby, we will be happy; but I am interested in the destiny of this unhappy person. You—you can assist me in rendering it more serene; in making him, perhaps, not less happy than ourselves.”

“I would spare no labour,” said Lord Montfort.

“Oh! that you would not!” exclaimed Miss Temple. “You are so good, so noble! You would sympathise even with him. What other man in your situation would!”

“What can be done?”

“Listen: he was engaged to his cousin, even on that fatal day when we first met; a lady with every charm and advantage that one would think could make a man happy; young, noble, and beautiful; of a most amiable and generous disposition, as her subsequent conduct has proved; and of immense wealth.”

“Miss Grandison?” said Lord Montfort.

“Yes: his parents looked forward to their union with delight, not altogether unmixed with anxiety. The Armines, with all their princely possessions, are greatly embarrassed, from the conduct of the last head of their house. Ferdinand himself has, I grieve to say, inherited too much of his grandfather’s imprudent spirit; his affairs, I fear, are terribly involved. When I knew him, papa was, as you are aware, a very poor man. This marriage would have cured all: my Digby, I wish it to take place.”

“How can we effect it?” asked Lord Montfort.

“Become his friend, dear Digby. I always

think you can do anything. Yes ! my only trust is in you. O my Digby ! make us all happy."

Lord Montfort rose, and walked up and down the room, apparently in profound meditation. At length he said, "Rest assured, Henrietta, that, to secure your happiness, nothing shall ever be wanting on my part. I will see, Mr. Glastonbury on this subject. At present-dearest, let us think of lighter things."

CHAPTER VIII.

WHICH IS RATHER STRANGE.

It was on the morning after the assembly at Bellair House that Ferdinand was roused from his welcome slumbers, for he had passed an almost sleepless night, by his servant bringing him a note, and telling him that it had been left by a lady in a carriage. He opened it, and read as follows :—

“Silly, silly Captain Armine! why did you not come to my Vauxhall last night? I wanted to present you to the fairest damsel in the world, who is a great fortune too, but that you don’t care about. When are you going to be married? Miss Grandison looked charming, but disconsolate without her knight. Your mother is an angel, and the Duchess of — is

quite in love with her. Your father, too, is a very worthy man. I love your family very much. Come and call upon poor old doting bedridden H. B., who is at home every day from two to six to receive her friends. Has charming Lady Armine got a page? I have one that would just suit her. He teases my poor squirrel so, that I am obliged to turn him away ; but he is a real treasure. That fine lady, Mrs. Montgomery Floyd, would give her ears for him ; but I love your mother much more, and so she shall have him. He shall come to her to-night. All the world takes tea with H. B. on Thursday and Saturday.”

“ One o’clock ! ” said Ferdinand. “ I may as well get up, and call in Brook Street, and save my mother from this threatened infliction. Heigho ! Day after day, and each more miserable than the other. How will this end ? ”

When Ferdinand arrived in Brook Street, he went up stairs without being announced, and found in the drawing-room, besides his mother

and Katherine, the Duchess, Lord Montfort, and Henrietta Temple.

The young ladies were in their riding-habits, Henrietta appeared before him, the same Henrietta whom he had met, for the first time, in the pleasance at Armine. Retreat was impossible. Her Grace received Ferdinand very cordially, and reminded him of old days. Henrietta bowed, but she was sitting at some distance with Miss Grandison, looking at some work. Her occupation covered her confusion. Lord Montfort came forward with extended hand.

“I have the pleasure of meeting a very old friend,” said his lordship.

Ferdinand just touched his lordship’s finger, and bowed rather stiffly; then, turning to his mother, he gave her Lady Bellair’s note. “It concerns you more than myself,” he observed.

“You were not at Lady Bellair’s last night, Captain Armine,” said her Grace.

“I never go anywhere” was the answer.

“He has been a great invalid,” said Lady Armine.

“Where is Glastonbury, Ferdinand?” said Lady Armine. “He never comes near us.”

“He goes every day to the British Museum.”

“I wish he would take me,” said Katherine. “I have never been. Have you?” she inquired, turning to Henrietta.

“I am ashamed to say never,” replied Henrietta. “It seems to me that London is the only city of which I know nothing.”

“Ferdinand,” said Katherine, “I wish you would go with us to the Museum some day. Miss Temple would like to go. You know Miss Temple,” she added, as if she of course supposed he had not that pleasure.

Ferdinand bowed; Lord Montfort came forward, and turned the conversation to Egyptian antiquities. When a quarter of an hour had passed, Ferdinand thought that he might now withdraw.

“Do you dine at home, Katherine, to-day?” he inquired.

Miss Grandison looked at Miss Temple;—the young ladies whispered.

“Ferdinand,” said Katherine, “what are you going to do?”

“Nothing—particular.”

“We are going to ride, and Miss Temple wishes you would come with us.”

“I should be very happy; but I have some business to attend to.”

“Oh! dear Ferdinand, that is what you always say. You really appear to me to be the most busy person in the world.”

“Pray come, Captain Armine,” said Lord Montfort.

“Thank you; it is really not in my power.” His hat was in his hand; he was begging her Grace to bear his compliments to the Duke, when Henrietta rose from her seat, and, coming up to him, said—“Do, Captain Armine, come with us; I ask you as a favour.”

That voice!—Oh! it came o’er his ear “like the sweet south”—it unmanned him quite. He scarcely knew where he was. He trembled from head to foot. His colour deserted him,

and the unlucky hat fell to the ground ; and yet she stood before him, awaiting his reply—calm, quite calm—serious—apparently a little anxious. The Duchess was in earnest conversation with his mother. Lord Montfort had walked up to Miss Grandison, and apparently was engaged in arranging a pattern for her. Ferdinand and Henrietta were quite unobserved. He looked up—he caught her eye—and then he whispered —“ this is hardly fair.”

She stretched forth her hand, took his hat, and laid it on the table ; then, turning to Katharine, she said, in a tone which seemed to admit no doubt, “ Captain Armine will ride with us ; ” and she seated herself by Lady Armine.

The expedition was a little delayed by Ferdinand having to send for his horse ; the others had, in the mean time, arrived. Yet this half hour, by some contrivance, did at length disappear. Lord Montfort continued talking to Miss Grandison. Henrietta remained seated by Lady Armine. Ferdinand revolved a great question

in his mind—and it was this: Was Lord Montfort aware of the intimate acquaintance between himself and Miss Temple? And what was the moving principle of her present conduct? He conjured up a thousand reasons, but none satisfied him. His curiosity was excited, and, instead of regretting his extracted promise to join the cavalcade, he rejoiced that an opportunity was thus afforded him of perhaps solving a problem in the secret of which he now began to feel extremely interested.

And yet in truth when Ferdinand found himself really mounted, and riding by the side of Henrietta Temple once more, for Lord Montfort was very impartial in his attentions to his fair companions, and Ferdinand continually found himself next to Henrietta, he really began to think the world was bewitched, and was almost sceptical whether he was or was not Ferdinand Armine. The identity of his companion too was so complete: Henrietta Temple in her riding-habit was the very image most keenly impressed

upon his memory. He looked at her and stared at her with a face of curious perplexity. She did not, indeed, speak much; the conversation was always general, and chiefly maintained by Lord Montfort, who, though usually silent and reserved, made on this occasion the most successful efforts to be amusing. His attention to Ferdinand too was remarkable; it was impossible to resist such genuine and unaffected kindness. It smote Ferdinand's heart that he had received his lordship's first advances so ungraciously. Compunction rendered him now doubly courteous; he was even once or twice quite gay.

The day was as fine as a clear sky, a warm sun, and a western breeze could render it. Tempted by so much enjoyment, their ride was very long. It was late, much later than they expected, when they returned home by the green lanes of pretty Willesden, and the Park was quite empty when they emerged from the Edgware Road into Oxford Street.

“ Now the best thing we can all do is to dine in St. James’s Square,” said Lord Montfort. “ It is ten minutes past eight, good people. We shall just be in time, and then we can send messages to Grosvenor Square and Brook Street. What say you, Armine? you will come, of course?”

“ Thank you, if you would excuse me.”

“ No, no; why excuse you?” said Lord Montfort: “ I think it shabby to desert us now, after all our adventures.”

“ Really you are very kind, but I never dine out.”

“ Dine out ! What a phrase ! You will not meet a human being ; perhaps not even my father. If you will not come, it will spoil everything.”

“ I cannot dine in a frock,” said Ferdinand.

“ I shall,” said Lord Montfort, “ and these ladies must dine in their habits I suspect.”

“ Oh ! certainly, certainly,” said the ladies.

“Do come, Ferdinand,” said Katherine.

“I ask you as a favour,” said Henrietta, turning to him and speaking in a low voice.

“Well,” said Ferdinand, shrugging his shoulders.

“That is well,” said Lord Montfort; “now let us trot through the Park, and the groom can call in Grosvenor Square and Brook Street, and gallop after us. This is amusing, is it not?”

CHAPTER IX.

WHICH IS ON THE WHOLE ALMOST AS PER-
PLEXING AS THE PRECEDING ONE.

WHEN Ferdinand found himself dining in St. James's Square, in the very same room where he had passed so many gay hours during that boyish month of glee which preceded his first joining his regiment, and then looked opposite him and saw Henrietta Temple, it seemed to him that, by some magical process or other, his life was acting over again, and the order of the scenes and characters had, by some strange mismanagement, got confused. Yet he yielded himself up to the excitement which had so unexpectedly influenced him; he was inflamed by a species of wild delight, which he could not understand, nor stop to analyse; and

when the Duchess retired with the young ladies to their secret conclave in the drawing-room, she said, "I like Captain Armine very much; he is so full of spirit and imagination. When we met him this morning, do you know I thought him rather stiff and fine? I regretted the bright boyish flow that I so well recollected, but I see I was mistaken."

"Ferdinand is very much changed," said Miss Grandison. "He was once the most brilliant person I think that ever lived; almost too brilliant; everybody by him seemed so tame! But since his illness he has quite changed. I have scarcely heard him speak or seen him smile these six months. There is not in the whole world a person so wretchedly altered. He is quite a wreck. I do not know what is the matter with him to-day. He seemed once almost himself."

"He indulged his feelings too much, perhaps," said Henrietta; "he lived perhaps too much alone after—after so severe an illness."

“Oh! no, it is not that,” said Miss Grandison, “it is not exactly that. Poor Ferdinand! he is to be pitied. I fear he will never be happy again.”

“Miss Grandison should hardly say that,” said the Duchess, “if report speaks truly.”

Katherine was about to reply, but checked herself.

Henrietta rose from her seat rather suddenly, and asked Katherine to touch the piano.—The Duchess took up the Morning Post.

“Poor Ferdinand! he used to sing once so beautifully too!” said Katherine to Miss Temple in a hushed voice: “he never sings now.”

“You must make him,” said Henrietta.

Miss Grandison shook her head.

“You have influence with him; you should exert it,” said Henrietta.

“I neither have, nor desire to have, influence with him,” said Miss Grandison. “Dearest Miss Temple, the world is in error with respect to myself and my cousin; and yet I ought not

to say to you what I have not thought proper to confess even to my aunt."

Henrietta leant over and kissed her forehead. "Say what you like, dearest Miss Grandison: you speak to a friend, who loves you, and will respect your secret."

The gentlemen at this moment entered the room, and interrupted this interesting conversation.

"You must not quit the instrument, Miss Grandison," said Lord Montfort, seating himself by her side. Ferdinand fell into conversation with the Duchess; and Miss Temple was the amiable victim of his Grace's passion for *ecarté*.

"Captain Armine is a most agreeable person," said Lord Montfort.

Miss Grandison rather stared. "We were just speaking of Ferdinand," she replied, "and I was lamenting his sad change."

"Severe illness, illness so severe as his, must for the moment change any one; we shall soon see him himself again."

“Never,” said Miss Grandison mournfully.

“You must inspire him,” said Lord Montfort. “I perceive you have great influence with him.”

“I give Lord Montfort credit for much acuter perception than that,” said Miss Grandison.

Their eyes met ; even Lord Montfort’s dark vision shrank before the searching glance of Miss Grandison. It conveyed to him that his purpose was not undiscovered.

“But you can exert influence, if you please,” said Lord Montfort.

“But it may not please me,” said Miss Grandison.

At this moment Mr. Glastonbury was announced. He had a general invitation, and was frequently in the habit of paying an evening visit when the family were disengaged. When he found Ferdinand, Henrietta, and Katherine, all assembled together, and in so strange a garb, his perplexity was wondrous. The tone of comparative ease too with which Miss Temple

addressed him completed his confusion. He began to suspect that some critical explanation had taken place. He looked around for information.

“ We have all been riding,” said Lord Montfort.

“ So I perceive,” said Glastonbury.

“ And, as we were too late for dinner, took refuge here,” continued his Lordship.

“ I observe it,” said Glastonbury.

“ Miss Grandison is an admirable musician, sir.”

“ She is an admirable lady in every respect,” said Glastonbury.

“ Perhaps you will join her in some canzonette ; I am so stupid as not to be able to sing. I wish I could induce Captain Armine.”

“ He has left off singing,” said Glastonbury mournfully. “ But Miss Temple ? ” added Glastonbury, bowing to that lady.

“ Miss Temple has left off singing too,” said Lord Montfort, very quietly.

“Come, Mr. Glastonbury,” said the Duchess, “time was when you and I have sung together. Let us try to shame these young folks.” So saying her Grace seated herself at the piano, and the gratified Glastonbury summoned all his energies to accompany her.

Lord Montfort seated himself by Ferdinand. “You have been severely ill, I am sorry to hear.”

“Yes: I have been rather shaken.”

“This spring will bring you round.”

“So every one tells me. I cannot say I feel its beneficial influence.”

“You should,” said Lord Montfort. “At our age we ought to rally quickly.”

“Yes! Time is the great physician. I cannot say I have much more faith in him than in the Spring.”

“Well then there is Hope; what think you of that?”

“I have no great faith,” said Ferdinand, affecting to smile.

“Believe then in Optimism,” said Henrietta

Temple, without taking her eyes off the cards.
“Whatever is, is best.”

“That is not my creed, Miss Temple,” said Ferdinand, and he rose and was about to retire.

“Must you go? Let us all do something to-morrow!” said Lord Montfort, interchanging a glance with Henrietta. “The British Museum; Miss Grandison wishes to go to the British Museum. Pray come with us.”

“You are very good, but—”

“Well! I will write you a little note in the morning and tell you our plans,” said Lord Montfort. “I hope you will not desert us.”

Ferdinand bowed and retired: he avoided catching the eye of Henrietta.

The carriages of Miss Temple and Miss Grandison were soon announced, and, fatigued with their riding-dresses, these ladies did not long remain.

“I will not go home with you to-night, dear Henrietta,” said Lord Montfort; “I wish to speak to Glastonbury.”

“To-day has been a day of trial. What do you think of affairs? I saw you speaking to Katherine. What do you think?”

“I think Ferdinand Armine is a very formidable rival. Do you know I am rather jealous?”

“Digby! can you be ungenerous?”

“My sweet Henrietta, pardon my levity. I spoke in the merest playfulness. Nay,” he continued, for she seemed really hurt, “say good night very sweetly.”

“Is there any hope?” said Henrietta.

“All’s well that ends well,” said Lord Montfort smiling; “God bless you.”

Glastonbury was about to retire, when Lord Montfort returned and asked him to come up to his Lordship’s own apartments, as he wished to show him a curious antique carving.

“You seemed rather surprised at the guests you found here to-night,” said Lord Montfort when they were alone.

Glastonbury looked a little confused. “It was certainly a curious meeting, all things con-

sidered," continued Lord Montfort: "Henrietta has never concealed any thing of the past from me, but I have always wished to spare her details. I told her this morning I should speak to you upon the subject, and that is the reason why I have asked you here."

"It is a painful history," said Glastonbury.

"As painful to me as to any one," said his Lordship; "nevertheless it must be told. When did you first meet Miss Temple?"

"I shall never forget it," said Glastonbury, sighing and moving very uneasily in his chair.

"I took her for Miss Grandison." And Glastonbury now entered into a complete history of every thing that had occurred.

"It is a strange, a wonderful story," said Lord Montfort, "and you communicated every thing to Miss Grandison?"

"Every thing but the name of her rival. To that she would not listen. It was not just, she said, to one so unfortunate and so unhappy."

"She seems an admirable person, that Miss Grandison," said Lord Montfort.

“She is indeed as near an angel as anything earthly can be,” said Glastonbury.

“Then it is still a secret to the parents?”

“Thus she would have it,” said Glastonbury.

“She clings to them, who love her indeed as a daughter; and she shrank from the desolation that was preparing for them.”

“Poor girl!” said Lord Montfort, “and poor Armine! By heavens I pity him from the bottom of my heart.”

“If you had seen him as I have,” said Glastonbury, “wilder than the wildest Bedlamite! It was an awful sight.”

“Ah! the heart, the heart,” said Lord Montfort: “it is a delicate organ, Mr. Glastonbury. And think you his father and mother suspect nothing?”

“I know not what they think,” said Glastonbury, “but they must soon know all.” And he seemed to shudder at the thought.

“Why must they?” asked Lord Montfort.

Glastonbury stared.

“Is there no hope of softening and subduing

all their sorrows? said Lord Montfort; “cannot we again bring together these young and parted spirits?”

“It is my only hope,” said Glastonbury, “and yet I sometimes deem it a forlorn one.”

“It is the sole desire of Henrietta,” said Lord Montfort, “cannot you assist us? Will you enter into this conspiracy of affection with us?”

“I want no spur to such a righteous work,” said Glastonbury, “but I cannot conceal from myself the extreme difficulty. Ferdinand is the most impetuous of human beings. His passions are a whirlwind; his volition more violent than becomes a suffering mortal.”

“You think then there is no difficulty but with him?”

“I know not what to say,” said Glastonbury; “calm as appears the temperament of Miss Grandison, she has heroic qualities. Oh! what have I not seen that admirable young lady endure! Alas! my Digby, my dear Lord, few passages of this terrible story are engraven on

my memory more deeply than the day when I revealed to her the fatal secret. Yet, and chiefly for her sake, it was my duty."

"It was at Armine?"

"At Armine—I seized an opportunity when we were alone together, and without fear of being disturbed. We had gone to view an old abbey in the neighbourhood. We were seated among its ruins, when I took her hand and endeavoured to prepare her for the fatal intelligence. "All is not right with Ferdinand," she immediately said; "there is some mystery. I have long suspected it." She listened to my recital, softened as much as I could for her sake, in silence. Yet her paleness I never can forget. She looked like a saint in a niche. When I had finished, she whispered me to leave her for some short time, and I walked away out of sight indeed, but so near that she might easily summon me. I stood alone until it was twilight, in a state of mournful suspense that I recal even now with anguish. At last I heard my name sounded, in a low, yet

distinct voice, and I looked round and she was there. She had been weeping. I took her hand and pressed it, and led her to the carriage. When I approached our unhappy home, she begged me to make her excuses to the family, and for two or three days we saw her no more. At length she sent for me, and told me she had been revolving all these sad circumstances in her mind, and she felt for others more even than for herself; that she forgave Ferdinand, and pitied him, and would act towards him as a sister; that her heart was distracted with the thoughts of the unhappy lady, whose name she would never know, but that if by her assistance I could effect their union, means should not be wanting, though their source must be concealed; that for the sake of her aunt, to whom she is indeed passionately attached, she would keep the secret, until it could no longer be maintained, and that in the meantime it was to be hoped, that health might be restored to her cousin, and Providence in some way interfere in favour of this unhappy family."

“ Angelic creature ! ” said Lord Montfort. “ So young too ; I think so beautiful ! Good God ! with such a heart what could Armine desire ! ”

“ Alas ! ” said Glastonbury, and he shook his head. “ You know not the love of Ferdinand Armine for Henrietta Temple. It is a wild and fearful thing ; it passeth human comprehension.”

Lord Montfort leant back in his chair, and covered his face with his hands. After some minutes he looked up and said in his usual placid tone, and with an unruffled brow, “ Will you take anything before you go, Mr. Glastonbury ? ”

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH CAPTAIN ARMINE INCREASES HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE VALUE OF MONEY, AND ALSO BECOMES AWARE OF THE ADVANTAGE OF AN ACQUAINTANCE WHO BURN COALS.

FERDINAND returned to his hotel in no very good humour, revolving in his mind Miss Temple's advice about optimism. What could she mean? Was there really a conspiracy to make him marry his cousin; and was Miss Temple one of the conspirators? He could, indeed, scarcely believe this, and yet it was the most probable deduction from all that had been said and done. He had lived, indeed, to witness such strange occurrences, that no event ought now to astonish him. Only to think that he had been sitting quietly in a drawing room with Henrietta


Temple, and she avowedly engaged to be married to another person, who was present ; and that he, Ferdinand Armine, should be the selected companion of their morning drive, and be calmly invited to contribute to their daily amusement by his social presence ! What next ? If this were not an insult—a gross, flagrant, and unendurable outrage—he was totally at a loss to comprehend what was meant by offended pride. Optimism indeed ! He felt far more inclined to embrace the faith of the Manichee ! And what a fool was he to have submitted to such a despicable, such a degrading situation ! What infinite weakness not to be able to resist her influence, the influence of a woman who had betrayed him ! Yes ! betrayed him. He had for some period reconciled his mind to entertaining the idea of Henrietta's treachery to him. Softened by time, atoned for by long suffering, extenuated by the constant sincerity of his purpose, his original imprudence, to use his own phrase in describing his misconduct, had gra-

dually ceased to figure as a valid and sufficient cause for her behaviour to him. When he recollected how he had loved this woman, what he had sacrificed for her, and what misery he had in consequence entailed upon himself and all those dear to him; when he contrasted his present perilous situation with her triumphant prosperity, and remembered that while he had devoted himself to a love which proved false, she, who had deserted him was, by a caprice of fortune, absolutely rewarded for her fickleness; he was enraged, he was disgusted, he despised himself for having been her slave—he began even to hate her. Terrible moment when we first dare to view with feelings of repugnance the being that our soul has long idolised! It is the most awful of revelations. We start back in horror, as if in the act of profanation.

Other annoyances, however, of a less ethereal character, awaited our hero on his return to his hotel. There he found a letter from his lawyer, informing him that he could no longer parry the

determination of one of Captain Armine's principal creditors to arrest him instantly for a very considerable sum. Unfortunately, too, it was a judgment debt, which there were no means of avoiding, except by payment, bail being inadmissible. Poor Ferdinand, mortified and harassed, with his heart and spirit alike broken, he could scarcely refrain from a groan ! However, some step must be taken. He drove Henrietta from his thoughts, and endeavouring to rally some of his old energy, revolved in his mind what desperate expedient yet remained.

His sleep was broken by dreams of bailiffs, and a vague idea of Henrietta Temple triumphing in his misery ; but he rose early, wrote a most diplomatic note to his menacing creditor, which he felt confident must gain him time, and then making a very careful toilette, for when a man is going to try to borrow money, it is wise to look prosperous, he took his way to a quarter of the town where lived a gentleman, with whose brother he had had some previous dealings at



Malta, and whose acquaintance he had made in England in reference to them.

It was in that gloomy quarter called Golden Square, the murky repose of which strikes so mysteriously on the senses, after the glittering bustle of the adjoining Regent Street, that Captain Armine stopped before a noble, yet now dingy mansion, that in old and happier days might probably have been inhabited by his grandfather, or some of his gay friends. A brass plate on the door informed the world that here resided Messrs. Morris and Levison, following the not very ambitious calling of coal merchants. But if all the pursuers of that somewhat humble trade could manage to deal in coals with the same dexterity as Messrs. Morris and Levison, what very great coal merchants they would be !

The ponderous portal obeyed the signal of the bell, and apparently opened without any human means ; and Captain Armine, proceeding down a dark, yet capacious passage, opened a door, which invited him by an inscription on ground glass,

that assured him he was entering the Counting-House. Here several clerks, ensconced within lofty walls of the darkest and dullest mahogany, were busily employed; yet one advanced to an aperture in this fortification, and accepted the card which the visiter offered him. The clerk surveyed the ticket with a peculiar glance; and then, begging the visiter to be seated, disappeared. He was not long absent, but soon invited Ferdinand to follow him. Captain Armine was ushered up a noble staircase, and into a saloon that once was splendid. The ceiling was richly carved; and there still might be detected the remains of its once gorgeous embellishment, in the faint forms of faded deities and the traces of murky gilding. The walls of this apartment were crowded with pictures, arranged, however, with little regard to taste, effect, or style. A sprawling copy of Titian's Venus flanked a somewhat prim peeress by Hoppner; a landscape that smacked of Gainsborough was the companion of a dauby moonlight, that must have

figured in the last exhibition ; and insipid Roman matrons by Hamilton, and stiff English heroes by Northcote, contrasted with a vast quantity of second-rate delineations of the orgies of Dutch boors, and portraits of favourite racers and fancy dogs. The room was crowded with ugly furniture of all kinds, very solid, and chiefly of mahogany ; among which were not less than three escritaires, to say nothing of the huge horsehair sofas. A sideboard of Babylonian proportions was crowned by three massy and enormous silver salvers, and immense branch candlesticks of the same precious metal, and a china punch-bowl which might have suited the dwarf in Brobdignag. The floor was covered with a faded Turkey carpet. But, amid all this solid splendour, there were certain intimations of feminine elegance in the veil of finely-cut pink paper which covered the nakedness of the empty but highly polished fire-place, and in the hand-screens, which were profusely ornamented with ribbon of the same hue, and one

of which afforded a most accurate, if not picturesque view of Margate, while the other glowed with a huge wreath of cabbage-roses and jonquils.

Ferdinand was not long alone, and Mr. Levison, the proprietor of all this splendour, entered. He was a short, stout man, with a grave but handsome countenance, a little bald, but nevertheless with an elaborateness of raiment, which might better have become a younger man. He wore a plum-coloured frock coat of the very finest cloth; his green velvet waistcoat was guarded by a gold chain, which would have been the envy of a new town council; an immense opal gleamed on the breast of his embroidered shirt; and his fingers were covered with very fine rings.

“Your sarvant, Captin,” said Mr. Levison; and he placed a chair for his guest.

“How are you, Levison?” responded our hero in a very easy voice. “Any news?”

Mr. Levison shrugged his shoulders, as he murmured, “Times is very bad, Captin.”

“ Oh ! I dare say, old fellow,” said Ferdinand, “ I wish they were as well with me as with you. By Jove, Levison, you must be making an infernal fortune.”

Mr. Levison shook his head, as he groaned out, “ I work hard, Captin ; but times is terrible.”

“ Fiddlededee ! Come ! I want you to assist me a little, old fellow. No humbug between us.”

“ Oh ! ” groaned Mr. Levison, “ you could not come at a worse time ; I don’t know what money is.”

“ Of course. However, the fact is, money I must have ; and so, old fellow, we are old friends ; and so, damn it, you must get it.”

“ What do you want, Captin ? ” slowly spoke Mr. Levison, with an expression of misery.

“ Oh ! I want rather a tolerable sum, and that is the truth ; but I only want it for a moment.”

“ It is not the time, ’tis the money,” said Mr. Levison. “ You know me and my pardner,

Captin, are always anxious to do what we can to sarve you."

"Well, now you can do me a real service, and, by Jove, you shall never repent it. To the point—I must have 1500*l*."

"One thousand five-hundred pound!" exclaimed Mr. Levison "Tayn't in the country."

"Humbug. It must be found. What is the use of all this stuff with me? I want 1500*l*., and you must give it me."

"I tell you what it is, Captin," said Mr. Levison, leaning over the back of a chair, and speaking with callous composure, "I tell you what it is, me and my pardner are wery willing always to assist you; but we want to know when this marriage is to come off, and that's the truth."

"Damn the marriage," said Captain Armine, rather staggered.

"There it is though," said Mr. Levison very quietly. "You know, Captin, there is the arrears on that 'ere annuity, three years next Michaelmas. I think it's Michaelmas—let me

see." So saying, Mr. Levison opened an escriptoire, and brought forward a most awful-looking volume, and, consulting the terrible index, turned to the fatal name of Armine. "Yes! three years next Michaelmas, Captin."

"Well, you will be paid," said Ferdinand.

"We hope so," said Mr. Levison; "but it is a long figure."

"Well, but you get capital interest."

"Pish!" said Mr. Levison; "ten per cent! Why! it is giving away the money. Why! that's the raw, Captin. With this here new bill, annuities is nothing. Me and my pardner don't do no annuities now. It's giving money away; and all this here money locked up—and all to sarve you."

"Well; you will not help me?" said Ferdinand, rising.

"Do you raly want fifteen hundred?" asked Mr. Levison.

"By Jove I do."

"Well now, Captin, when is this marrige to come off?"

“ Have I not told you a thousand times, and Morris too, that my cousin is not to marry until one year has passed since my grandfather’s death. It is barely a year. But of course, at this moment, of all others, I cannot afford to be short.”

“ Very true, Captin ; and we are the men to sarve you, if we could. But we cannot. Never was such times for money ; there is no seeing it. However, we will do what we can. Things is going very bad at Malta, and that’s the truth. There’s that young Catchimwhocan, we are in with him wery deep ; and now he has left the Fusileers, and got into parliament, he don’t care this for us. If he would only pay us, you should have the money ; so help me you should.”

“ But he won’t pay you,” said Ferdinand.
“ What can you do ? ”

“ Why, I have a friend,” said Mr. Levison, “ who I know has got three hundred pound at his banker’s, and he might lend it us ; but we shall have to pay for it.”

“ I suppose so,” said Ferdinand. “ Well, three hundred.”

“ I have not got a shilling myself,” said Mr. Levison. “ Young Touchemup left us in the lurch yesterday for 750*l.* so help me, and never gave us no notice. Now, you are a gentleman, Captin ; you never pay, but you always give us notice.”

Ferdinand could scarcely resist smiling at Mr. Levison’s idea of a gentleman.

“ Well, what else can you do ? ”

“ Why, there is two hundred coming in to-morrow,” said Mr. Levison ; “ I can depend on that.”

“ Well, that is five.”

“ And you want fifteen hundred,” said Mr. Levison. “ Well, me and my pardner always like to sarve you, and it is wery awkward certainly for you to want money at this moment. But if you want to buy jewels, I can get you any credit you like, you know.”

“ We will talk of that by and by,” said Ferdinand.

“Fifteen hundred pound,” ejaculated Mr. Levison, “Well I suppose we must make it 700*l*. somehow or other, and you must take the rest in coals.”

“Oh ! by Jove, Levison, that is too bad.”

“I don’t see no other way,” said Mr. Levison rather doggedly.

“But damn it, my good fellow, my dear Levison, what the deuse am I to do with 800*l*. worth of coals.”

“Lord ! my dear Captin, 800*l*. worth of coals is a mere nothing. With your connection you will get rid of them in a morning. All you have got to do, you know, is to give your friends an order on us, and we will let you have cash at a little discount.

“Then you can let me have the cash now at a little discount, or even a great—I cannot get rid of 800*l*. worth of coals.

“Why it ’tayn’t four hundred chaldron, Captin,” rejoined Mr. Levison. “Three or four friends would do the thing. Why ! Baron Squash takes ten thousand chaldron of us every

year. But he has such a knack; he gits the Clubs to take them."

"Baron Squash indeed! Do you know who you are talking to, Mr. Levison? Do you think that I am going to turn into a coal merchant; your working partner, by Jove! No, Sir, give me the 700*l.* without the coals, and charge what interest you please."

"We could not do it, Captin. 'Tayn't our way."

"I ask you once more, Mr. Levison, will you let me have the money, or will you not?"

"Now, Captin, don't be so high and mighty! 'Tayn't the way to do business. Me and my pardner wish to sarve you, we does indeed. And if a hundred pound will be of any use to you, you shall have it on your acceptance, and we won't be curious about any name that draws, we won't indeed."

"Well, Mr. Levison," said Ferdinand, rising, "I see we can do nothing to-day. The hundred pounds would be of no use to me. I will think

over your proposition. Good morning to you."

"Ah, do!" said Mr. Levison, bowing and opening the door. "Do, Captin. We wish to sarve you, we does indeed. See how we behave about that arrears. Think of the coals, now do. Now for a bargain, come! Come Captin, I dare say now you could get us the business of the Junior Sarvice Club, and then you shall have the seven hundred on your acceptance for three months at two shillings in the pound, come?"

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH CAPTAIN ARMINE UNEXPECTEDLY
RESUMES HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH LORD
CATCHIMWHOCAN, WHO INTRODUCES HIM
TO MR. BOND SHARPE.

FERDINAND quitted his kind friend Mr. Levison in no very amiable mood; but just as he was leaving the house, a cabriolet, beautifully painted of a brilliant green colour, picked out with a somewhat cream-coloured white, and drawn by a showy Holstein horse of tawny tint, with a flowing and milk-white tail and mane, and caparisoned in harness almost as precious as Mr. Levison's sideboard, dashed up to the door.

"Armine, by Jove!" exclaimed the driver with great cordiality.

"Ah! Catch, is it you?" said Ferdinand.

“What! have you been here?” said Lord Catchimwhocan. “At the old work, eh? Is ‘me and my pardner’ troublesome, for your countenance is not very radiant.”

“By Jove, old fellow!” said Ferdinand, in a depressed tone, “I am in an infernal scrape, and also in a cursed rage. Nothing is to be done here.”

“Never mind,” said his Lordship; “keep up your spirits, jump into my cab and we will see how we can carry on the war. I am only going to speak one word to ‘me and my pardner.’”

So saying his Lordship skipped into the house as gay as a lark, although he had a bill for a good round sum about to be dishonoured in the course of a few hours.

“Well, my dear Armine,” he resumed, when he reappeared and took the reins, “Now, as I drive along, tell me all about it. For if there be a man in the world whom I should like to ‘sarve’ it is thyself, my noble Ferdinand.”

With this encouragement Captain Armine was

not long in pouring his cares into a congenial bosom.

“ I know the man to ‘sarve’ you,” said Catchimwhocan. “The fact is, these fellows here are regular old fashioned humbugs. The only idea they have is money, money. They have no enlightened notions. I will introduce you to a regular trump, and if he does not do our business I am much mistaken. Courage, old fellow. How do you like this start ? ”

“Deused neat. By the bye, Catch, my boy, you are going it rather, I see.”

“To be sure. I have always told you there is a certain system in affairs which ever prevents men being floored. No fellow is ever dished who has any connection. What man that ever had his run, was really ever fairly put *hors de combat*, unless he was some one who ought never to have entered the arena, blazing away without any set, making himself a damned fool and every body his enemy. As long as a man bustles about and is in a good set, something always turns up. I

got into Parliament, you see ; and you, you are going to be married."

All this time the cabriolet was dashing down Regent Street, twisting through the Quadrant, whirling along Pall Mall, until it finally entered Cleveland Row, and stopped before a newly painted, newly pointed, and exceedingly compact mansion, the long brass knocker of whose dark green door sounded beneath the practised touch of his Lordship's tiger. Even the tawny Holstein horse, with the white flowing mane, seemed conscious of the locality, and stopped before the accustomed resting place in the most natural manner imaginable. A very tall serving-man, very well powdered, and in a very dark and well appointed livery, immediately appeared.

"At home?" inquired Lord Catchimwhocan, with a peculiarly confidential expression.

"To you, my Lord," responded the attendant.

"Jump out, Armine," said his Lordship, and they entered the house.

"Alone?" said his Lordship.

“Not alone,” said the servant, ushering the friends into the dining room, “but he shall have your Lordship’s card immediately. There are several gentlemen waiting in the third drawing-room; so I have shown your Lordship in here, and shall take care that he sees your lordship before any one.”

“That’s a devilish good fellow,” said Lord Catchimwhocan, putting his hand into his waistcoat pocket to give him a sovereign; but not finding one he added, “I shall remember you.”

The dining-room into which they were shown was at the back of the house, and looked into very agreeable gardens. The apartment, indeed, was in some little confusion at this moment, for their host gave a dinner to-day, and his dinners were famous. The table was arranged for eight guests; its appointments indicated refined taste. A candelabra of Dresden china was the centre piece; there was a whole service of the same material, even to the handles of the knives and forks; and the choice variety of glass attracted

Ferdinand's notice. The room was lofty and spacious; it was very simply and soberly furnished; not an object which could distract the taste or disturb the digestion. But the side-board, which filled a recess at the end of the apartment, presented a crowded group of gold plate that might have become a palace: magnificent shields, tall vases, ancient tankards, goblets of carved ivory set in precious metal, and cups of old ruby glass mounted on pedestals, glittering with gems. This accidental display certainly offered an amusing contrast to the perpetual splendour of Mr. Levison's beaufet; and Ferdinand was wondering whether it would turn out that there was as marked a difference between the two owners, when his companion and himself were summoned to the presence of Mr. Bond Sharpe.

They ascended a staircase perfumed with flowers, and on each landing place was a classic tripod or pedestal crowned with a bust. And then they were ushered into a drawing room of

Parisian elegance; buhl cabinets, marqueterie tables, hangings of the choicest damask suspended from burnished cornices of old carving. The chairs had been rifled from a Venetian palace; the couches were part of the spoils of the French revolution. There were glass screens in golden frames, and a clock that represented the death of Hector, the chariot wheel of Achilles conveniently telling the hour. A round table of Mosaic, mounted on a golden pedestal, was nearly covered with papers; and from an easy chair supported by air cushions, half rose to welcome them Mr. Bond Sharpe. He was a man not many years the senior of Captain Armine and his friend; of a very elegant appearance, pale, pensive, and prepossessing. Deep thought was impressed upon his clear and protruding brow, and the expression of his grey sunk eyes, which were delicately arched, was singularly searching. His figure was slight but compact. His dress plain, but a model in its fashion. He was habited entirely in black, and his only ornament were his studs,

which were turquoise and of great size: but there never were such boots, so brilliant and so small!

He welcomed Lord Catchimwhocan in a voice scarcely above a whisper, and received Captain Armine in a manner alike elegant and dignified.

“My dear Sharpe,” said his Lordship, “I am going to introduce to you my most particular friend, and an old brother officer. This is Captain Armine, the only son of Sir Ratcliffe, and the heir of Armine Castle. He is going to be married very soon to his cousin Miss Grandison, the greatest heiress in England.”

“Hush, hush,” said Ferdinand, shrinking under this false representation, and Mr. Sharpe with considerate delicacy endeavoured to check his Lordship.

“Well, never mind, I will say nothing about that,” continued Lord Catchimwhocan. “The long and the short of it is this, that my friend Armine is hard up, and we must carry on the war till we get into winter quarters. You are

just the man for him, and by Jove, my dear Sharpe, if you wish sensibly to oblige me, who I am sure am one of your warmest friends, you will do everything for Armine that human energy can possibly effect."

"What is the present difficulty that you have?" inquired Mr. Sharpe of our hero, in a calm whisper.

"Why the present difficulty that he has," said Lord Catchimwhocan, "is that he wants 1500*l*."

"I suppose you have raised money, Captain Armine?" said Mr. Sharpe.

"In every way," said Captain Armine.

"Of course," said Mr. Sharpe, "at your time of life one naturally does. And I suppose you are bothered for this 1500*l*?"

"I am threatened with immediate arrest, and arrest in execution."

"Who is the party?"

"Why I fear an unmanageable one, even by you. It is a house at Malta."

“ Mr. Bolus, I suppose ? ”

“ Exactly.”

“ I thought so.”

“ Well, what can be done ? ” said Lord Catchimwhocan.

“ Oh ! there is no difficulty,” said Mr. Sharpe very quietly. “ Captain Armine can have any money he likes.”

“ I shall be happy,” said Captain Armine, “ to pay any consideration you think fit.”

“ Oh ! my dear sir, I cannot think of that. Money is a drug now. I shall be happy to accommodate you without giving you any trouble. You can have the 1500*l.* if you please this moment.”

“ Really you are very generous,” said Ferdinand, very much surprised, “ but I feel I am not entitled to such favours. What security can I give you ? ”

“ I lend the money to you. I want no security. You can repay me when you like. Give me your note of hand.” So saying Mr.

Sharpe opened a drawer, and taking out his cheque-book drew a draft for the 1500*l*. “I believe I have a stamp in the house,” he continued, looking about. “Yes, here is one. If you will fill this up, Captain Armine, the affair may be concluded at once.”

“Upon my honour, Mr. Sharpe,” said Ferdinand, very confused, “I do not like to appear insensible to this extraordinary kindness, but really I came here by the merest accident, and without any intention of soliciting or receiving such favours. And my kind friend here has given you much too glowing an account of my resources. It is very probable I shall occasion you great inconvenience.”

“Really, Captain Armine,” said Mr. Sharpe, with a slight smile, “if we were talking of a sum of any importance, why one might be a little more punctilious, but for such a bagatelle as 1500*l*., we have already wasted too much time in its discussion. I am happy to serve you.”

Ferdinand stared, remembering Mr. Levison

and the coals. Mr. Sharpe himself drew up the note, and presented it to Ferdinand, who signed it and pocketed the draft.

“I have several gentlemen waiting,” said Mr. Bond Sharpe, “I am sorry I cannot take this opportunity of cultivating your acquaintance, Captain Armine, but I should esteem it a great honour if you would dine with me to-day. Your friend Lord Catchimwhocan favours me with his company, and you might meet a person or two who would amuse you.”

“I really shall be very happy,” said Ferdinand.

And Mr. Bond Sharpe again slightly rose and bowed them out of the room.

“Well, is not he a trump?” said Lord Catchimwhocan, when they were once more in the cab.

“I am so astonished,” said Ferdinand, “that I cannot speak. Who in the name of fortune is this great man?”

“A genius,” said Lord Catchimwhocan.

“ Don’t you think he is a devilish good looking fellow ? ”

“ The best-looking fellow I ever saw,” said the grateful Ferdinand.

“ And capital manners ? ”

“ Most elegant.”

“ Neatest dressed man in town ! ”

“ Exquisite taste ! ”

“ What a house ! ”

“ Capital ! ”

“ Did you ever see such furniture ? It beats your rooms at Malta.”

“ I never saw anything more complete in my life.”

“ What plate ! ”

“ Miraculous ! ”

“ And believe me we shall have the best dinner in town.”

“ Well, he has given me an appetite,” said Ferdinand.

“ But who is he ? ”

“ Why, by business he is what is called a con-

veyancer ; that is to say, he is a lawyer by inspiration."

"He is a wonderful man," said Ferdinand.

"He must be very rich."

"Yes ; Sharpe must be worth his quarter of a million. And he has made it in such a devilish short time !"

"Why, he is not much older than we are ?"

"Ten years ago that man was a prizefighter," said Lord Catchimwhocan.

"A prizefighter !" exclaimed Ferdinand.

"Yes ; and licked everybody. But he was too great a genius for the ring, and took to the turf."

"Ah !"

"Then he set up a hell."

"Hum !"

"And then he turned it into a subscription-house."

"Hoh !"

"He keeps his hell still, but it works itself now. In the mean time, he is the first usurer

in the world, and will be in the next parliament."

"But if he lends money on the terms he accommodates me, he will hardly increase his fortune."

"Oh! he can do the thing when he likes. He took a fancy to you. The fact is, my dear fellow, Sharpe is very rich, and wants to get into society. He likes to oblige young men of distinction, and can afford to risk a few thousands now and then. By dining with him to-day, you have quite repaid him for his loan. Besides, the fellow has a great soul; and, though born on a dunghill, nature intended him for a palace, and he has placed himself there."

"Well, this has been a remarkable morning," said Ferdinand Armine, as Lord Catchimwhocan put him down at his club. "I am very much obliged to you, dear Catch!"

“Not a word, my dear fellow. You have helped me before this, and glad am I to be the means of assisting the best fellow in the world, and that we all think you. Au revoir! We dine at eight.”

CHAPTER XII.

MISS GRANDISON MAKES A REMARKABLE DISCOVERY.

IN the mean time, while the gloomy morning which Ferdinand had anticipated terminated with so agreeable an adventure, Henrietta and Miss Grandison, accompanied by Lord Montfort and Glastonbury, paid their promised visit to the British Museum.

“ I am sorry that Captain Armine could not accompany us,” said Lord Montfort. “ I sent to him this morning very early, but he was already out.”

“ He has many affairs to attend to,” said Glastonbury.

Miss Temple looked grave ; she thought of poor Ferdinand and all his cares. She knew

well what were those affairs to which Glastonbury alluded. The thought that perhaps at this moment he was struggling with rapacious creditors, made her melancholy. The novelty and strangeness of the objects which awaited her, diverted, however, her mind from those painful reflections. Miss Grandison, who had never quitted England, was delighted with every thing she saw ; but the Egyptian gallery principally attracted the attention of Miss Temple. Lord Montfort, regardful of his promise to Henrietta, was very attentive to Miss Grandison.

“ I cannot help regretting that your cousin is not here,” said his Lordship, returning to a key that he had already touched. But Katherine made no answer.

“ He seemed so much better for the exertion he made yesterday,” resumed Lord Montfort. “ I think it would do him good to be more with us.”

“ He seems to like to be alone,” said Katherine.

“ I wonder at that,” said Lord Montfort, “ I cannot conceive a happier life than we all lead.”

“ You have cause to be happy, and Ferdinand has not,” said Miss Grandison very calmly.

“ I should have thought that he had very great cause,” said Lord Montfort inquiringly.

“ No person in the world is so unhappy as Ferdinand,” said Katherine.

“ But cannot we cure his unhappiness ?” said his Lordship. “ We are his friends ; it seems to me with such friends as Miss Grandison and Miss Temple one ought never to be unhappy.”

“ Miss Temple can scarcely be called a friend of Ferdinand,” said Katherine.

“ Indeed a very warm one, I assure you.”

“ Ah ! that is your influence.”

“ Nay ! it is her own impulse.”

“ But she only met him yesterday for the first time.”

“ I assure you Miss Temple is an older friend of Captain Armine than I am,” said his Lordship.

“ Indeed !” said Miss Grandison, with an air of considerable astonishment.

“ You know they were neighbours in the country.”

“ In the country !” repeated Miss Grandison.

“ Yes; Mr. Temple, you know, resided not far from Armine.”

“ Not far from Armine !” still repeated Miss Grandison.

“ Digby,” said Miss Temple, turning to him at this moment, “ tell Mr. Glastonbury about your sphinx at Rome. It was granite, was it not ?”

“ And most delicately carved. I never remember having observed an expression of such beautiful serenity. The discovery that, after all, they are male countenances is quite a mortification. I loved their mysterious beauty.”

What Lord Montfort had mentioned of the previous acquaintance of Henrietta and her cousin, made Miss Grandison muse. Miss Temple’s address to Ferdinand yesterday had struck her at the moment as somewhat singular; but the impression had not dwelt upon her mind.

But now it occurred to her as very strange that Henrietta should have become so intimate with the Armine family and herself, and never have mentioned that she was previously acquainted with their nearest relative. Lady Armine was not acquainted with Miss Temple until they met at Bellair House. That was certain. Miss Grandison had witnessed their mutual introduction. Nor Sir Ratcliffe. And yet Henrietta and Ferdinand were friends, warm friends, old friends, intimately acquainted: so said Lord Montfort; and Lord Montfort never coloured, never exaggerated. All this was very mysterious. And, if they were friends, old friends, warm friends—and Lord Montfort said they were, and, therefore, there could be no doubt of the truth of the statement—their recognition of each other yesterday was singularly frigid. It was not indicative of a very intimate acquaintance. Katherine had ascribed it to the natural disrelish of Ferdinand now to be introduced to any one. And yet they were friends, old friends,

warm friends. Henrietta Temple and Ferdinand Armine ! Miss Grandison was so perplexed, that she scarcely looked at another object in the galleries.

The ladies were rather tired when they returned from the Museum. Lord Montfort walked to the Travellers, and Henrietta agreed to remain and dine in Brook Street. Katherine and herself retired to Miss Grandison's boudoir, a pretty chamber, where they were sure of being alone. Henrietta threw herself upon a sofa, and took up the last new novel ; Miss Grandison seated herself on an ottoman by her side, and worked at a purse, which she was making for Mr. Temple.

“ Do you like that book ? ” said Katherine.

“ I like the lively parts, but not the serious ones,” replied Miss Temple ; “ the author has observed, but he has not felt.”

“ It is satirical,” said Miss Grandison ; “ I wonder why all this class of writers aim now at the sarcastic. I do not find life the constant sneer they make it.”

“It is because they do not understand life,” said Henrietta, “but have some little experience of society. Therefore their works give a perverted impression of human conduct ; for they accept as a principal that which is only an insignificant accessory ; and they make existence a succession of frivolities, when even the career of the most frivolous has its profounder moments.”

“How vivid is the writer’s description of a ball or a dinner !” said Miss Grandison ; “everything lives and moves. And yet, when the hero makes love, nothing can be more unnatural. His feelings are neither deep, nor ardent, nor tender. All is stilted, and yet ludicrous.”

“I do not despise the talent which describes so vividly a dinner and a ball,” said Miss Temple. “As far as it goes, it is very amusing ; but it should be combined with higher materials. In a fine novel manners should be observed, and morals should be sustained ; we require thought and passion, as well as costume and the lively representation of conventional arrangements ;

and the thought and passion will be the better for these accessories, for they will be relieved in the novel as they are relieved in life, and the whole will be more true."

"But have you read that love scene, Henrietta? It appeared to me so ridiculous!"

"I never read love scenes," said Henrietta Temple.

"Oh! I love a love story," said Miss Grandison, smiling, "if it be natural and tender, and touch my heart. When I read such scenes, I weep."

"Ah! my sweet Katherine, you are soft-hearted."

"And you, my Henrietta, what are you?"

"Hard-hearted! The most callous of mortals."

"Oh! what would Lord Montfort say?"

"Lord Montfort knows it. We never have love scenes."

"And yet you love him?"

"Dearly: I love and I esteem him."

“Well,” said Miss Grandison, “I may be wrong, but if I were a man I do not think I should like the lady of my love to esteem me.”

“And yet esteem is the only genuine basis of happiness, believe me, Kate. Love is a dream.”

“And how do you know, dear Henrietta?”

“All writers agree it is.”

“The writers you were just ridiculing?”

“A fair retort ; and yet, though your words are the most witty, believe me mine are the most wise.”

“I wish my cousin would wake from his dream,” said Katherine. “To tell you a secret, love is the cause of his unhappiness. Don’t move, dear Henrietta,” added Miss Grandison, “we are so happy here ;” for Miss Temple, in truth, seemed not a little discomposed.

“You should marry your cousin,” said Miss Temple.

“You little know Ferdinand or myself, when you give that advice,” said Katherine. “We

shall never marry ; nothing is more certain than that. In the first place, to be frank, Ferdinand would not marry me, nothing would induce him ; and in the second place, I would not marry him, nothing would induce me."

"Why not ?" said Henrietta, in a low tone, holding her book very near to her face.

"Because I am sure that we should not be happy," said Miss Grandison. "I love Ferdinand, and once could have married him. He is so brilliant that I could not refuse his proposal. And yet I feel it is better for me that we have not married, and I hope it may yet prove better for him ; for I love him very dearly. He is indeed my brother."

"But why should you not be happy?" inquired Miss Temple.

"Because we are not suited to each other. Ferdinand must marry some one whom he looks up to, somebody brilliant like himself, some one who can sympathise with all his fancies. I am too calm and quiet for him. You would suit him much better, Henrietta."

“You are his cousin ; it is a misfortune ; if you were not, he would adore you, and you would sympathise with him.”

“I think not : I should like to marry a very clever man,” said Katherine. “I could not endure marrying a fool, or a commonplace person ; I should like to marry a person very superior in talent to myself, some one whose opinion would guide me on all points, one from whom I could not differ. But not Ferdinand ; he is too imaginative, too impetuous ; he would neither guide me, nor be guided by me.”

Miss Temple did not reply, but turned over a page of her book.

“Did you know Ferdinand before you met him yesterday at our house ?” inquired Miss Grandison, very innocently.

“Yes !” said Miss Temple.

“I thought you did,” said Miss Grandison. “I thought there was something in your manner that indicated you had met before. I do not think you knew my aunt, before you met her at Bellair House ?”

“ I did not.”

“ Nor Sir Ratcliffe ? ”

“ Nor Sir Ratcliffe.”

“ But you did know Mr. Glastonbury ? ”

“ I did know Mr. Glastonbury.”

“ How very odd ! ” said Miss Grandison.

“ What is odd ? ” inquired Henrietta.

“ That you should have known Ferdinand before.”

“ Not at all odd. He came over one day to shoot at Papa’s. I remember him very well.”

“ Oh,” said Miss Grandison. “ And did Mr. Glastonbury come over to shoot ? ”

“ I met Mr. Glastonbury one morning that I went to see the Picture Gallery at Armine. It is the only time I ever saw him.”

“ Oh ! ” said Miss Grandison again, “ Armine is a beautiful place, is it not ? ”

“ Most interesting.”

“ You know the Pleasaunce.”

“ Yes.”

“ I did not see you when I was at Armine.”

“ No ; we had just gone to Italy.”

“How beautiful you look to-day, Henrietta!” said Miss Grandison. “Who could believe that you ever were so ill!”

“I am grateful that I have recovered,” said Henrietta. “And yet I never thought that I should return to England.”

“You must have been so very ill in Italy, about the same time as poor Ferdinand was at Armine. Only think, how odd you should have both been so ill about the same time, and now that we should all be so intimate!”

Miss Temple looked perplexed and annoyed. “Is it so odd?” she at length said in a low tone.

“Henrietta Temple,” said Miss Grandison, with great earnestness, “I have discovered a secret: you are the lady with whom my cousin is in love.”

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH FERDINAND HAS THE HONOUR OF
DINING WITH MR. BOND SHARPE.

WHEN Ferdinand arrived at Mr. Bond Sharpe's, he was welcomed by his host in a magnificent suite of saloons, and introduced to two of the guests who had previously arrived. The first was a very stout man, past middle age, whose epicurean countenance twinkled with humour. This was Lord Castlefyshe, an Irish peer of great celebrity in the world of luxury and play—keen at a bet—still keener at a dinner. Nobody exactly knew who the other gentleman, Mr. Blandford, really was, but he had the reputation of being enormously rich, and was proportionately respected. He had been about town for the last twenty years, and did not look

a day older than at his first appearance. He never spoke of his family—was unmarried—and apparently had no relations; but he had contrived to identify himself with the first men in London—was a member of every club of great repute—and of late years had even become a sort of authority; which was strange, for he had no pretension—was very quiet—and but humbly ambitious—seeking, indeed, no happier success than to merge in the brilliant crowd—an accepted atom of the influential aggregate. As he was not remarkable for his talents or his person, and as his establishment, though well appointed, offered no singular splendour, it was rather strange that a gentleman who had apparently dropped from the clouds, or crept out of a kennel, should have succeeded in planting himself so vigorously in a soil which shrinks from anything not indigenous, unless it be recommended by very powerful qualities. But Mr. Blandford was good tempered, and was now easy and experienced, and there was a vague

tradition that he was immensely rich, a rumour which Mr. Blandford always contradicted in a manner which skilfully confirmed its truth.

“Does Mirabel dine with you, Sharpe?” inquired Lord Castlefyshe of his host, who nodded assent.

“You won’t wait for him, I hope?” said his Lordship. “By the bye, Blandford, you shirked last night.”

“I promised to look in at the poor Duke’s before he went off,” said Mr. Blandford.

“Oh! he has gone, has he?” said Lord Castlefyshe. “Does he take his cook with him?”

But here the servant ushered in Count Alcibiades de Mirabel, Charles Doricourt, and Mr. Bevil.

“Excellent Sharpe, how do you do?” exclaimed the Count. “Castlefyshe, what bêtises have you been talking to Crocky about Felix Winchester? Good Blandford, excellent Blandford, how is my good Blandford?”

Mr. Bevil was a very tall and very handsome young man, of a great family and great estate, who passed his life in an imitation of Count Alcibiades de Mirabel. He was always dressed by the same tailor, and it was his pride that his cab or his vis-à-vis was constantly mistaken for the equipage of his model; and really now, as the shade stood beside its substance, quite as tall, almost as good-looking, with the satin-lined coat thrown open with the same style of flowing grandeur, and revealing a breast plate of starched cambric scarcely less broad and brilliant, the uninitiated might have held the resemblance as perfect. The wristbands were turned up with not less compact precision, and were fastened by jewelled studs, that glittered with not less radiancy. The satin waistcoat, the creaseless hosen, were the same; and if the foot were not quite as small, its Parisian polish was not less bright. But here, unfortunately, Mr. Bevil's mimetic powers deserted him.

"We start, for soul is wanting there!"

The Count Mirabel could talk at all times, and at all times well; Mr. Bevil never opened his mouth. Practised in the world, the Count Mirabel was nevertheless the child of impulse, though a native grace, and an intuitive knowledge of mankind, made every word pleasing and every act appropriate; Mr. Bevil was all art, and he had not the talent to conceal it. The Count Mirabel was gay, careless, generous; Mr. Bevil was solemn, calculating, and rather a screw. It seemed that the Count Mirabel's feelings grew daily more fresh, and his faculty of enjoyment more keen and relishing; it seemed that Mr. Bevil could never have been a child, but that he must have issued to the world ready equipped, like Minerva, with a cane instead of a lance, and a fancy hat instead of a helmet. His essence of high breeding was never to be astonished, and he never permitted himself to smile, except in the society of very intimate friends.

Charles Doricourt was another friend of the Count Mirabel, but not his imitator. His feelings

were really worn, but it was a fact he always concealed. He had entered life at a remarkably early age, and had experienced every scrape to which youthful flesh is heir. Any other man but Charles Doricourt must have sunk beneath these accumulated disasters, but Charles Doricourt always swam. Nature had given him an intrepid soul; experience had cased his heart with iron. But he always smiled; and audacious, cool, and cutting, and very easy, he thoroughly despised mankind, upon whose weaknesses he practised without remorse. But he was polished and amusing, and faithful to his friends. The world admired him and called him Charley, from which it will be inferred that he was a privileged person, and was applauded for a thousand actions, which in any one else would have been met with the most decided reprobation.

“Who is that young man?” inquired the Count Mirabel of Mr. Bond Sharpe, taking his host aside and pretending to look at a picture.

“He is Captain Armine, the only son of Sir Ratchliffe Armine. He has just returned to England after a long absence.”

“Hum ! I like his appearance very much,” said the Count. “It is very distinguished.”

Dinner and Lord Catchimwhocan were announced at the same moment ; Captain Armine found himself seated next to the Count Mirabel. The dinners at Mr. Bond Sharpe’s were dinners which his guests came to eat. Mr. Bond Sharpe had engaged for his club-house the most celebrated of living artists—a gentleman who, it was said, received a thousand a-year, whose convenience was studied by a chariot, and amusement secured by a box at the French play. There was, therefore, at first little conversation, save criticism on the performances before them and that chiefly panegyrical ; each dish was delicious, each wine exquisite ; and yet, even in these occasional remarks, Ferdinand was pleased with the lively fancy of his neighbour, affording

an elegant contrast to the somewhat gross unction with which Lord Castlefyshe, whose very soul seemed wrapped up in his occupation, occasionally expressed himself.

“Will you take some wine, Captain Armine?” said the Count Mirabel, with a winning smile. “You have recently returned here?”

“Very recently,” said Ferdinand.

“And you are glad?”

“As it may be, I hardly know whether to rejoice or not.”

“Then, by all means rejoice,” said the Count; “for, if you are in doubt, it surely must be best to decide upon being pleased.”

“I think this is the most infernal country there ever was,” said Lord Catchimwhocan.

“My dear Catch!” said the Count Mirabel, “you think so, do you? You make a mistake, you think no such thing, my dear Catch. Why is it the most infernal? Is it because the women are the handsomest, or because the horses are the best? Is it because it is the only

country where you can get a good dinner, or because it is the only country where there are fine wines? Or is it because it is the only place where you can get a coat made, or where you can play without being cheated, or where you can listen to an opera without your ears being destroyed? Now, my dear Catch, you pass your life in dressing and in playing hazard, in eating good dinners, in drinking good wines, in making love, in going to the Opera, and in riding fine horses. Of what then have you to complain?"

"Oh! the damned climate!"

"On the contrary, it is the only good climate there is. In England you can go out every day, and at all hours; and then, to those who love variety, like myself, you are not sure of seeing the same sky every morning you rise, which, for my part, I think the greatest of all existing sources of ennui."

"You reconcile me to my country, Count," said Ferdinand, smiling.

“Ah! you are a sensible man; but that dear Catch is always repeating nonsense which he hears from somebody else. To-morrow,” he added, in a low voice, “he will be for the climate.”

The conversation of men when they congregate together is generally dedicated to one of two subjects: politics or women. In the present instance, the party was not political; and it was the fair sex, and particularly the most charming portion of it, in the good metropolis of England, that were subjected to the poignant criticism or the profound speculation of these practical philosophers. There was scarcely a celebrated beauty in London, from the proud peeress to the vain opera-dancer, whose charms and conduct were not submitted to their masterly analysis. And yet it would be but fair to admit, that their critical ability was more eminent and satisfactory than their abstract reasoning upon this interesting topic; for it was curious to observe that, though every one present piqued himself upon his profound knowledge of the sex,

not two of the sages agreed in the constituent principles of female character. One declared that women were governed by their feelings; another maintained that they had no heart; a third propounded that it was all imagination; a fourth that it was all vanity. Lord Castlefyshe muttered something about their passions, and Charley Doricourt declared that they had no passions whatever. But they all agreed in one thing, to wit, that the man who permitted himself a moment's uneasiness about a woman was a fool.

All this time, Captain Armine spoke little, but ever to the purpose and chiefly to the Count Mirabel, who pleased him. Being very handsome, and moreover of a very distinguished appearance, this silence on the part of Ferdinand made him a general favourite, and even Mr. Bevil whispered his approbation to Lord Catchimwhocan.

"The fact is," said Charles Doricourt, "it is only boys and old men who are plagued by women. They take advantage of either state of childhood. Eh! Castlefyshe?"

“In that respect, then, somewhat resembling you, Charley,” replied his Lordship, who did not admire the appeal. “For no one can doubt you plagued your father; I was out of my teens, fortunately, before you played *ecarté*.”

“Come, good old Fyshe,” said Count Mirabel, “take a glass of claret, and do not look so fierce. You know very well Charley learnt every thing of you.”

“He never learnt of me to spend a fortune upon an actress,” said his Lordship. “I have spent a fortune; but thank heaven it was on myself.”

“Well, as for that,” said the Count, “I think there is something great in being ruined for one’s friends. If I were as rich as I might have been, I would not spend much on myself. My wants are few;—a fine house, fine carriages, fine horses, a complete wardrobe, the best opera box, the first cook, and pocket money—that is all I require. I have these and I get on pretty well; but if I had a princely fortune, I would make every good fellow I know quite happy.”

“Well,” said Charles Doricourt, “you are a lucky fellow, Mirabel. I have had horses, houses, carriages, opera boxes, and cooks, and I have had a great estate; but pocket money I never could get. Pocket money was the thing which always cost me the most to buy of all.”

The conversation now fell upon the theatre. Mr. Bond Sharpe was determined to have a theatre. He believed it was reserved for him to revive the drama. Mr. Bond Sharpe piqued himself upon his patronage of the stage. He certainly had a great admiration of actresses. There was something in the management of a great theatre which pleased the somewhat imperial fancy of Mr. Bond Sharpe. The manager of a great theatre is a kind of monarch. Mr. Bond Sharpe longed to seat himself on the throne, with the prettiest women in London for his court, and all his fashionable friends rallying round their sovereign. He had an impression that great results might be obtained with his organising energy and illimitable capital. Mr.

Bond Sharpe had unbounded confidence in the power of capital. Capital was his deity. He was confident that it could always produce alike genius and triumph. Mr. Bond Sharpe was right: capital is a wonderful thing, but we are scarcely aware of this fact until we are past thirty; and then, by some singular process which we will not now stop to analyze, one's capital is in general sensibly diminished. As men advance in life, all passions resolve themselves into money. Love, ambition, even poetry, end in this.

"Are you going to Shropshire's this autumn, Charley?" said Lord Catchimwhocan.

"Yes, I shall go."

"I don't think I shall," said his Lordship, "it is such a bore."

"It is rather a bore, but he is a good fellow."

"I shall go," said Count Mirabel.

"You are not afraid of being bored?" said Ferdinand, smiling.

"Between ourselves, I do not understand what this being bored is," said the Count. "He

who is bored appears to me a bore. To be bored supposes the inability of being amused; you must be a dull fellow. Wherever I may be, I thank heaven that I am always diverted."

"But you have such nerves, Mirabel;" said Lord Catchimwhocan. "By Jove! I envy you. You are never floored."

"Floored! what an idea! What should floor me? I live to amuse myself, and I do nothing that does not amuse me. Why should I be floored?"

"Why I do not know, but every other man is floored now and then. As for me, my spirits are sometimes something dreadful."

"When you have been losing."

"Well, we cannot always win. Can we, Sharpe? That would not do. But by Jove! you are always in a good humour, Mirabel, when you lose."

"Fancy a man ever being in low spirits," said the Count Mirabel. "Life is too short for

such bêtises. The most unfortunate wretch alive calculates unconsciously that it is better to live than to die. Well then, he has something in his favour. Existence is a pleasure, and the greatest. The world cannot rob us of that, and if it be better to live than to die, it is better to live in a good humour than a bad one. If a man be convinced that existence is the greatest pleasure, his happiness may be increased by good fortune, but it will be essentially independent of it. He who feels that the greatest source of pleasure always remains to him, ought never to be miserable. The sun shines on all; every man can go to sleep; if you cannot ride a fine horse, it is something to look upon one; if you have not a fine dinner, there is some amusement in a crust of bread and Gruyere. Feel slightly, think little, never plan, never brood. Every thing depends upon the circulation; take care of it. Take the world as you find it, enjoy every thing. Vive la bagatelle ! ”

Here the gentlemen rose, took their coffee, and ordered their carriages.

“Come with us,” said Count Mirabel to Ferdinand.

Our hero accepted the offer of his agreeable acquaintance. There was a great prancing and rushing of horses and cabs and vis-à-vis at Mr. Bond Sharpe’s door, and in a few minutes the whole party were dashing up St. James’s-street, where they stopped before a splendid building, resplendent with lights and illuminated curtains.

“Come, we will make you an honorary member, mon cher Captain Armine,” said the Count; “and do not say, *Oh! lasciate ogni speranza*, when you enter here.”

They ascended a magnificent staircase, and entered a sumptuous and crowded saloon, in which the entrance of the Count Mirabel and his friends made no little sensation. Mr. Bond Sharpe glided along, dropping oracular sentences, without condescending to stop to speak to those whom he addressed. Charley Doricourt

and Mr. Blandford walked away together towards a further apartment. Lord Castlefyshe and Lord Catchimwhocan were soon busied with *ecarté*.

“ Well, Faneville, good General, how do you do ? ” said the Count Mirabel. “ Where have you dined to-day ?—at the Balcombes’ ? You are a very brave man, *mon General* ! Ah ! Stock, good Stock, excellent Stock,” he continued, addressing Mr. Million de Stockville, “ that Burgundy you sent me is capital. How are you, my dear fellow ? Quite well ? Fitzwarrene, I did that for you : your business is all right. Ah ! my good Massey, *mon cher*, *mon brave*, Anderson will let you have that horse. And what is doing here ? Is there any fun ? Fitzwarrene, let me introduce you to my friend Captain Armine : ” (in a lower tone) “ excellent *garçon* ! You will like him very much. We have been all dining at Bond’s.”

“ A good dinner ? ”

“ Of course a good dinner. I should like to

see a man who would give me a bad dinner : that would be a bêtise, to ask me to dine, and then give me a bad dinner ! ”

“ I say, Mirabel,” exclaimed a young man, “ have you seen Horace Poppington about the match ? ”

“ It is arranged ; ’tis the day after to-morrow, at nine o’clock.”

“ Well, I bet on you, you know.”

“ Of course you bet on me. Would you think of betting on that good Pop, with that gun ? Pah ! Eh ! bien ! I shall go in the next room.” And the Count walked away, followed by Mr. Bevil.

Ferdinand remained talking for some time with Lord Fitzwarrene. By degrees the great saloon had become somewhat thinner ; some had stolen away to the House, where a division was expected ; quiet men, who just looked in after dinner, had retired ; and the play-men were engaged in the contiguous apartments. Mr. Bond Sharpe approached Ferdinand, and

Lord Fitzwarrene took this opportunity of withdrawing.

“ I believe you never play, Captain Armine,” said Mr. Bond Sharpe.

“ Never,” said Ferdinand.

“ You are quite right.”

“ I am rather surprised at your being of that opinion,” said Ferdinand, with a smile.

Mr. Bond Sharpe shrugged his shoulders. “ There will always be votaries enough,” said Mr. Bond Sharpe, “ whatever may be my opinion.”

“ This is a magnificent establishment of yours,” said Ferdinand.

“ Yes ; it is a very magnificent establishment. I have spared no expense to produce the most perfect thing of the kind in Europe ; and it is the most perfect thing of the kind. I am confident that no noble in any country has an establishment better appointed. I despatched an agent to the Continent to procure this furniture : his commission had no limit, and he was absent two

years. My cook was with Charles X. ; the cellar is the most choice and considerable that was ever collected. I take a pride in the thing ; but I lose money by it."

"Indeed !"

"I have made a fortune ; there is no doubt of that ; but I did not make it here."

"It is a great thing to make a fortune," said Ferdinand.

"Very great," said Mr. Bond Sharpe. "There is only one thing greater, and that is, to keep it when made."

Ferdinand smiled.

"Many men can make fortunes ; few can keep them," said Mr. Bond Sharpe. "Money is power, and rare are the heads that can withstand the possession of great power."

"At any rate, it is to be hoped that you have discovered this more important secret," said Ferdinand ; "though, I confess, to judge from my own experience, I should fear that you are too generous."

“I had forgotten that to which you allude,” said his companion, very quietly. “But with regard to myself, whatever may be my end, I have not yet reached my acmé.”

“You have at least my good wishes,” said Ferdinand.

“I may some day claim them,” said Mr. Bond Sharpe. “My position,” he continued “is difficult. I have risen by pursuits which the world does not consider reputable, yet if I had not had recourse to them, I should be less than nothing. My mind, I think, is equal to my fortune, I am still young, and I would now avail myself of my power and establish myself in the land, a recognised member of society. But this cannot be. Society shrinks from an obscure foundling, a prize fighter, a leg, a hell-keeper, and an usurer. Debarred therefore from a fair theatre for my energy and capital, I am forced to occupy, perhaps exhaust, myself in multiplied speculations. Hitherto they have flourished, and perhaps my theatre, or my newspaper, may be as profitable as my stud. But—I would

gladly emancipate myself. These efforts seem to me, as it were, unnecessary and unnatural. The great object has been gained. It is a tempting of fate. I have sometimes thought myself the Napoleon of the sporting world; I may yet find my St. Helena."

"Forewarned, forearmed, Mr. Sharpe."

"I move in a magic circle: it is difficult to extricate myself from it. Now, for instance, there is not a man in that room who is not my slave. You see how they treat me. They place me upon an equality with them. They know my weakness; they fool me up to the top of my bent. And yet there is not a man in that room who, if I were to break to-morrow, would walk down St. James's Street to serve me. Yes! there is one—there is the Count. He has a great and generous soul. I believe Count Mirabel sympathizes with my situation. I believe he does not think, because a man has risen from an origin the most ignoble and obscure, to a very powerful position, by great courage

and dexterity, and let me add also, by some profound thought, by struggling too, be it remembered, with a class of society as little scrupulous though not as skilful as himself, that he is necessarily an infamous character. What if at eighteen years of age, without a friend in the world, trusting to the powerful frame and intrepid spirit with which Nature had endowed me, I flung myself into the ring? Who should be a gladiator if I were not? Is that a crime? What if at a later period, with a brain for calculation which none can rival, I invariably succeeded in that in which the greatest men in the country fail! Am I to be branded, because I have made half a million by a good book? What if I have kept a gambling house? From the back parlour of an oyster shop, my hazard table has been removed to this palace. Had the play been foul, this metamorphosis would never have occurred. It is true I am an usurer. My dear sir, if all the usurers in this great metropolis could only pass in procession before you at this moment,

how you would start! You might find some Right Honourables among them; many a great functionary, many a grave magistrate; fathers of families, the very models of respectable characters, patrons and presidents of charitable institutions, and subscribers for the suppression of those very gaming houses, whose victims in nine cases out of ten are their principal customers. I speak not in bitterness. On the whole I must not complain of the world, but I have seen a great deal of mankind, and more than most of what is considered its worst portion. The world, Captain Armine, believe me, is neither as bad nor as good as some are apt to suppose. And after all," said Mr. Bond Sharpe, shrugging up his shoulders, "perhaps we ought to say with our friend the Count, 'Vive la bagatelle!' Will you take some supper?"

CHAPTER XVI.

MISS GRANDISON PIQUES THE CURIOSITY OF LORD MONTFORT, AND COUNT MIRABEL DRIVES FERDINAND DOWN TO RICHMOND, WHICH DRIVE ENDS IN AN AGREEABLE ADVENTURE AND AN UNEXPECTED CONFIDENCE.

THE discovery that Henrietta Temple was the secret object of Ferdinand's unhappy passion, was a secret which Miss Grandison prized like a true woman. Not only had she made this discovery, but from her previous knowledge and her observation during her late interview with Miss Temple, Katherine was persuaded that Henrietta must still love her cousin as before. Miss Grandison was extremely attached to Henrietta; she was interested in her cousin's

welfare, and devoted to the Armine family. All her thoughts and all her energies were now engaged in counteracting, if possible, the consequences of those unhappy misconceptions which had placed them all in this painful situation.

It was on the next day that she had promised to accompany the Duchess and Henrietta on a water excursion. Lord Montfort was to be their cavalier. In the morning she found herself alone with his Lordship in St. James's Square.

“What a charming day!” said Miss Grandison. “I anticipate so much pleasure! Who is our party?”

“Ourselves alone,” said Lord Montfort. “Lady Armine cannot come, and Captain Armine is engaged. I fear you will find it very dull, Miss Grandison.”

“Oh! not at all. By-the-bye, do you know I was very much surprised yesterday at finding that Ferdinand and Henrietta were such old acquaintances.”

“Were you?” said Lord Montfort, in a very peculiar tone.

“It is very odd that Ferdinand never will go with us anywhere. I think it is very bad taste.”

“I think so too,” said Lord Montfort.

“I should have thought that Henrietta was the very person he would have admired; that he would have been quite glad to be with us. I can easily understand his being wearied to death with a cousin,” said Miss Grandison; “but, Henrietta, it is so very strange that he should not avail himself of the delight of being with her.”

“Do you really think that such a cousin as Miss Grandison can drive him away.”

“Why, to tell you the truth, my dear Lord Montfort, Ferdinand is placed in a very awkward position with me. You are our friend, and so I speak to you in confidence. Sir Ratcliffe and Lady Armine both expect that Ferdinand and myself are going to be married. Now neither

or us have the slightest intention of anything of the sort."

"Very strange, indeed," said Lord Montfort. "The world will be very much astonished, more so than myself, for I confess to a latent suspicion on the subject."

"Yes, I was aware of that," said Miss Grandison, "or I should not have spoken with so much frankness. For my own part, I think we are very wise to insist upon having our own way, for an ill-assorted marriage must be a most melancholy business." Miss Grandison spoke with an air almost of levity, which was rather unusual with her.

"An ill-assorted marriage," said Lord Montfort. "And what do you call an ill-assorted marriage, Miss Grandison?"

"Why many circumstances might constitute such an union," said Katherine; "but I think if one of the parties were in love with another person, that would be quite sufficient to ensure a tolerable portion of wretchedness."

“ I think so, too,” said Lord Montfort ; “ an union, under such circumstances, would be very ill-assorted. But Miss Grandison is not in that situation ? ” he added with a faint smile.

“ That is scarcely a fair question,” said Katherine, with great gaiety, “ but there is no doubt Ferdinand Armine is.”

“ Indeed ! ”

“ Yes ; he is in love, desperately in love that I have long discovered. I wonder with whom it can be ? ”

“ I wonder ! ” said Lord Montfort.

“ Do you ? ” said Miss Grandison. “ Well, I have sometimes thought that you might have a latent suspicion of that subject, too. I thought you were his confident.”

“ I ! ” said Lord Montfort ; “ I, of all men in the world ? ”

“ And why not you of all men in the world ? ” said Miss Grandison.

“ Our intimacy is so slight,” said Lord Montfort.

“ Hum ! ” said Miss Grandison. “ And now

I think of it, it does appear to me very strange how we have all become suddenly such intimate friends. The Armines and your family not previously acquainted ; Miss Temple, too, unknown to my aunt and uncle. And yet we never live now out of each others' sight. I am sure I am very grateful for it ; I am sure it is very agreeable, but still it does appear to me to be very odd. I wonder what the reason can be ? ”

“ It is that you are so charming, Miss Grandison,” said Lord Montfort.

“ A compliment from you ! ”

“ Indeed, no compliment, dearest Miss Grandison,” said Lord Montfort, drawing near her. “ Favoured as Miss Temple is in so many respects, in none, in my opinion, is she more fortunate than in the possession of so admirable a friend.”

“ Not even in the possession of so admirable a lover, my Lord ? ”

“ All must love Miss Temple who are acquainted with her,” said Lord Montfort, very seriously.

“ Indeed, I think so,” said Katherine, in a more subdued voice. “ I love her ; her career fills me with a strange and singular interest. May she be happy, for happiness she indeed deserves ! ”

“ I have no fonder wish than to secure that happiness, Miss Grandison,” said Lord Montfort ;—“ by any means,” he added.

“ She is so interesting ! ” said Katherine. “ When you first knew her she was very ill ? ”

“ Very.”

“ She seems quite recovered.”

“ I hope so.”

“ Mr. Temple says her spirits are not what they used to be. I wonder what was the matter with her ? ”

Lord Montfort was silent.

“ I cannot bear to see a fine spirit broken,” continued Miss Grandison. “ There was Ferdinand. Oh ! if you had but known my cousin before he was unhappy. Oh ! that was a spirit ! Oh ! he was the most brilliant being that ever lived. And then I was with him during all his

illness. It was so terrible. I almost wish that we could have loved each other. It is very strange, he must have been ill at Armine, at the very time Henrietta was ill in Italy. And I was with him in England, while you were solacing her. And now we are all friends. There seems a sort of strange destiny in our lots, does there not ? ”

“ A happy lot that can in any way be connected with Miss Grandison,” said Lord Montfort.

At this moment her Grace and Henrietta entered ; the carriage was ready ; and in a few minutes they were driving to Whitehall Stairs, where a beautiful boat awaited them.

In the meantime Ferdinand Armine was revolving the strange occurrences of yesterday. Altogether it was an exciting and satisfactory day. In the first place, he had extricated himself from his most pressing difficulties ; in the next, he had been greatly amused ; and thirdly, he had made a very interesting acquaintance, for such he esteemed Count Mirabel.

Just at the very moment when, lounging over a very late breakfast, he was thinking of Bond Sharpe and his great career, and then turning in his mind whether it were possible to follow the gay counsels of his friends of yesterday, and never plague himself about a woman again, the Count Mirabel was announced.

“*Mon cher Armine,*” said the Count, “you see I kept my promise, and would find you at home.”

The Count stood before him, the best dressed man in London, fresh and gay as a bird, with not a care on his sparkling visage, and his eye bright with *bonhommie*. And yet Count Mirabel had been the very last to desert the recent mysteries of Mr. Bond Sharpe; and, as usual, the dappled light of dawn had guided him to his luxurious bed—that bed that always afforded him serene slumbers, whatever might be the adventures of the day, or the result of the night’s campaign. How the Count Mirabel did laugh at those poor devils, who wake only to moralize

over their own folly with broken spirits and aching heads ! Care—he knew nothing about ; Time he defied ; Indisposition he could not comprehend. He had never been ill in his life, even for five minutes.

Ferdinand was really very glad to see him ; there was something in Count Mirabel's very presence which put every body in good spirits. His lightheartedness was caught by all. Melancholy was a farce in the presence of his smile ; and there was no possible combination of scrapes that could withstand his kind and brilliant raillery. At the present moment Ferdinand was in a sufficiently good humour with his destiny, and he kept up the ball with effect ; so that nearly an hour passed in very amusing conversation.

“ You were a stranger among us yesterday,” said Count Mirabel, “ I think you were rather diverted. I saw you did justice to that excellent Bond Sharpe. That shews that you have a mind above prejudice. Do you know he was

by far the best man at table except ourselves?"

Ferdinand smiled.

"It is true, he has a heart and a brain. Old Castlefyshe has neither. As for the rest of our friends, some have hearts without brains, and the rest brains without hearts. Which do you prefer?"

"'Tis a fine question," said Ferdinand; "and yet I confess I should like to be callous."

"Ah! but you cannot be," said the Count, "you have a soul of great sensibility—I see that in a moment."

"You see very far, and very quickly, Count Mirabel," said Ferdinand, with a little reserve.

"Yes; in a minute," said the Count, "in a minute, I read a person's character. I know you are very much in love, because you changed countenance yesterday when we were talking of women."

Ferdinand changed countenance again. "You are a very extraordinary man, Count," he at length observed.

“Of course ; but, mon cher Armine, what a fine day this is ! What are you going to do with yourself ?”

“Nothing ; I never do anything,” said Ferdinand, in an almost mournful tone.

“A melancholy man ! Quelle bêtise ! I will cure you ; I will be your friend, and put you all right. Now, we will just drive down to Richmond ; we will have a light dinner—a flounder, a cutlet, and a bottle of champaign, and then we will go to the French play. I will introduce you to Jenny Vertpré. She is full of wit ; perhaps she will ask us to supper. Allons, mon ami, mon cher Armine ; allons, mon brave !”

Ceremony was a farce with Alcibiades de Mirabel. Ferdinand had nothing to do ; he was attracted to his companion. The effervescence produced by yesterday's fortunate adventure had not quite subsided ; he was determined to forget his sorrows, and, if only for a day, join in the lively chorus of *Vive la bagatelle* ! So, in a few moments, he was safely

ensconced in the most perfect cabriolet in London, whirled along by a horse that stepped out with a proud consciousness of its master.

The Count Mirabel enjoyed the drive to Richmond as if he had never been to Richmond in his life. The warm sun, the western breeze, every object he passed and that passed him, called for his praise or observation. He inoculated Ferdinand with his gaiety, as Ferdinand listened to his light lively tales, and his flying remarks, so full of merriment and poignant truth and daring fancy. When they had arrived at the Star and Garter, and ordered their dinner, they strolled into the Park, along the Terrace walk; and they had not proceeded fifty paces, when they came up with the Duchess and her party, who were resting on a bench and looking over the valley.

Ferdinand would gladly have bowed and passed on; but that was impossible. He was obliged to stop and speak to them, and it was difficult to disembarass himself of friends who

greeted him so kindly. Ferdinand presented his companion. The ladies were very charmed to know so celebrated a gentleman, of whom they had heard so much. Count Mirabel, who had the finest tact in the world, but whose secret spell, after all, was perhaps only that he was always natural, adapted himself in a moment to the characters, the scene, and the occasion. He was quite delighted at these unexpected sources of amusement, that had so unexpectedly revealed themselves; and in a few minutes they had all agreed to walk together, and in due time the Duchess was begging Ferdinand and his friend to dine with them. Before Ferdinand could frame an excuse, Count Mirabel had accepted the proposition. After passing the morning together so agreeably, to go and dine in separate rooms—it would be a *bêtise*. This word *bêtise* settled everything with Count Mirabel; when once he declared that anything was a *bêtise*, he would hear no more.

It was a most charming stroll. Never was

Count Mirabel more playful, more engaging, more completely winning. Henrietta and Katherine alike smiled upon him, and the Duchess was quite enchanted. Even Lord Montfort, who might rather have entertained a prejudice against the Count before he knew him—and none can after—and who was prepared for something rather brilliant, but pretending, presumptuous, fantastic, and affected, quite yielded to his amiable gaiety, and his racy and thoroughly genuine and simple manner. So they walked and talked and laughed, and all agreed that it was the most fortunately fine day and the most felicitous rencontre that had ever occurred, until the dinner hour was at hand. The Count was at her Grace's side, and she was leaning on Miss Temple's arm. Lord Montfort and Miss Grandison had fallen back apace, as their party had increased. Ferdinand fluttered between Miss Temple and his cousin; but would have attached himself the latter, had not Miss Temple occasionally addressed him. He was glad, however, when they returned to dinner.

“We have only availed ourselves of your Grace’s permission to join our dinners,” said Count Mirabel, offering the Duchess his arm. He placed himself at the head of the table, Lord Montfort took the other end. To the surprise of Ferdinand, Miss Grandison, with a heedlessness that was quite remarkable, seated herself next to the Duchess, so that Ferdinand was obliged to sit by Henrietta Temple, who was thus separated from Lord Montfort.

The dinner was as gay as the stroll. Ferdinand was the only person who was rather silent.

“How amusing he is !” said Miss Temple, turning to Ferdinand, and speaking in an undertone.

“Yes ; I envy him his gaiety.”

“Be gay.”

“I thank you, I dare say I shall in time. I have not yet quite embraced all Count Mirabel’s philosophy. He says that the man who plagues himself for five minutes about a woman, is an idiot. When I think the same,

which I hope I may soon, I dare say I shall be as gay."

Miss Temple addressed herself no more to Ferdinand.

They returned by water. To Ferdinand's great annoyance, the Count did not hesitate for a moment to avail himself of the Duchess's proposal that he and his companion should form part of the crew. He gave immediate orders that his cabriolet should meet him at Whitehall Stairs, and Ferdinand found there was no chance of escape.

It was a delicious summer evening. The setting sun bathed the bowers of Fulham with refulgent light, just as they were off delicate Rosebank; but the air long continued warm, and always soft, and the last few miles of their pleasant voyage were tinted by the young and glittering moon.

"I wish we had brought a guitar," said Miss Grandison; "Count Mirabel, I am sure, would sing to us?"

“And you, you will sing to us without a guitar, will you not?” said the Count, smiling.

“Henrietta, will you sing?” said Miss Grandison.

“With you.”

“Of course; now you must,” said the Count, so they did.

This gliding home to the metropolis on a summer eve, so soft and still, with beautiful faces, as should always be the case, and with sweet sounds, as was the present,—there is something very ravishing in the combination. The heart opens; it is a dangerous moment. As Ferdinand listened once more to the voice of Henrietta, even though it was blended with the sweet tones of Miss Grandison, the passionate past vividly recurred to him. Fortunately he did not sit near her; he had taken care to be the last in the boat. He turned away his face, but its stern expression did not escape the observation of the Count Mirabel.

“And now, Count Mirabel, you must really favour us,” said the Duchess.

“Without a guitar,” said the Count, and he began thrumming on his arm, for an accompaniment. “Well, when I was with the Duc d’Angouleme in Spain, we sometimes indulged in a serenade at Seville. I will try to remember one.”

A SERENADE OF SEVILLE.

I.

*Come forth, come forth, the star we love
Is high o’er Guadalquivir’s grove,
And tints each tree with golden light ;
Ah ! Rosalie, one smile from thee were far more bright !*

II.

*Come forth, come forth, the flowers that fear
To blossom in the sun’s career,
The moonlight with their odours greet ;
Ah ! Rosalie, one sigh from thee were far more sweet !*

III.

*Come forth, come forth, one hour of night,
When flowers are fresh, and stars are bright,
Were worth an age of gaudy day ;
Then, Rosalie, fly, fly to me ; nor longer stay !*

“I hope the lady came,” said Miss Temple, “after such a pretty song.”

“Of course,” said the Count, “they always come.”

“Ferdinand, will you sing?” said Miss Grandison.

“I cannot, Katherine.”

“Henrietta, ask Ferdinand to sing,” said Miss Grandison; “he makes it a rule never to do any thing I ask him, but I am sure you have more influence.”

Lord Montfort came to the rescue of Miss Temple. “Miss Temple has spoken so often to us of your singing, Captain Armine?” said his Lordship, and yet Lord Montfort, in this allegation, a little departed from the habitual exactitude of his statements.

“How very strange!” thought Ferdinand; “her callousness or her candour baffles me. I will try to sing,” he continued aloud, “but it is a year really since I ever did.”

In a voice of singular power and melody—and

with an expression which increased as he proceeded, until the singer seemed scarcely able to controul his emotions—Captain Armine thus proceeded—

CAPTAIN ARMINE'S SONG.

I.

*My heart is like a silent lute
Some faithless hand has thrown aside,
Those chords are dumb, those tones are mute,
That once sent forth a voice of pride !
Yet even o'er the lute neglected
The wind of heaven will sometimes fly,
And even thus the heart dejected,
Will sometimes answer to a sigh !*

II.

*And yet to feel another's power
May grasp the prize for which I pine,
And others now may pluck the flower
I cherished for this heart of mine—
No more, no more ! The hand forsaking,
The lute must fall, and shivered lie
In silence : and my heart, thus breaking,
Responds not even to a sigh !*

Miss Temple seemed busied with her shawl ;

perhaps she felt the cold ; Count Mirabel, next whom she sat, was about to assist her. Her face was turned to the water ; it was streaming with tears. Without appearing to notice, Count Mirabel leant forward, and engaged every body's attention ; so that she was unobserved and had time to recover. And yet she was aware that the Count Mirabel had remarked her emotion, and was grateful for his quick and delicate consideration. It was very fortunate that Westminster Bridge was now in sight, for after this song of Captain Armine, every one became very dull or very pensive ; even Count Mirabel was silent.

The ladies and Lord Montfort entered their britscha. They bid a cordial adieu to Count Mirabel, and begged him to call upon them in St. James's Square, and the Count and Ferdinand were alone.

“ Cher Armine,” said the Count, as he was driving up Charing Cross, “ Catch told me you were going to marry your cousin. Which of those two young ladies is your cousin ? ”

“ The fair girl, Miss Grandison.”

“ So I understood. She is very pretty, but you are not going to marry her, are you ? ”

“ No ; I am not.”

“ And who is Miss Temple ? ”

“ She is going to be married to Lord Montfort.”

“ Diable ! But what a fortunate man ! What do you think of that Miss Temple ? ”

“ I think of her as all, I suppose, must.”

“ She is beautiful ; she is the most beautiful woman I ever saw. She marries for money, I suppose ? ”

“ She is the richest heiress in England ; she is much richer than my cousin.”

“ C'est dryle. But she does not want to marry Lord Montfort ? ”

“ Why ? ”

“ Because, my dear fellow, she is in love with you.”

“ By Jove ! Mirabel, what a fellow you are ! What do you mean ? ”

“ Mon cher Armine, I like you more than any

body. I wish to be, I am your friend. Here is some cursed contretemps. There is a mystery, and both of you are victims of it. Tell me everything. I will put you right."

"Ah! my dear Mirabel, it is past even your skill. I thought I could never speak on these things to human being, but I am attracted to you by the same sympathy which you flatter me by expressing for myself. I want a confidant, I need a friend—I am most wretched."

"Eh! bien! we will not go to the French play. As for Jenny Vertpré, we can sup with her any night. Come to my house, and we will talk over everything. But trust me, if you wish to marry Henrietta Temple, you are an idiot if you do not have her."

So saying, the Count touched his bright horse, and in a few minutes the cabriolet stopped before a small but admirably appointed house in Berkeley Square.

"Now, mon cher," said the Count, "coffee and confidence!"

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH THE COUNT MIRABEL COMMENCES
HIS OPERATIONS WITH GREAT SUCCESS.

Is there a more gay and graceful spectacle in the world than Hyde Park, at the end of a long sunny morning in the merry month of May or June? Where can we see such beautiful women, such gallant cavaliers, such fine horses, and such brilliant equipages? The scene, too, is worthy of such agreeable accessories: the groves, the gleaming waters, and the triumphal arches. In the distance, the misty heights of Surrey, and the bowery glades of Kensington.

It was the day after the memorable voyage from Richmond. Eminent among the glittering throng, Count Mirabel cantered along on his

Arabian, scattering gay recognitions and bright words. He reined in his steed beneath a tree, under whose shade were assembled a knot of listless cavaliers. The Count received their congratulations, for this morning he had won his pigeon match.

“Only think of that old fool, Castlefyshe, betting on Poppington,” said the Count. “I want to see him—old idiot! Who knows where Charley is?”

“I do, Mirabel,” said Lord Catchimwhocan. “He has gone to Richmond with Blandford and the two little Furzlers.”

“That good Blandford! Whenever he is in love, he always gives a dinner. It is a droll way to succeed.”

“Apropos, will you dine with me to-day, Mirabel,” said Mr. de Stockville.

“Impossible, my dear fellow; I dine with Fitzwarrene.”

“I say, Mirabel,” drawled out a young man, “I saw you yesterday driving a man

down to Richmond yourself. Who is your friend ?”

“No one you know, or will know. 'Tis the best fellow that ever lived ; but he is under my guidance, and I shall be very particular to whom he is introduced.”

“Lord ! I wonder who he can be !” said the young man.

“I say, Mirabel, you will be done on Goshawk, if you don't take care, I can tell you that.”

“Thank you, good Coventry ; if you like to bet the odds, I will take them.”

“No, my dear fellow, I do not want to bet, but at the same time——”

“You have an opinion that you will not back. That is a luxury, for certainly it is of no use. I would advise you to enjoy it.”

“Well, I must say, Mirabel,” said Lord Catchimwhocan, “I think the same about Goshawk.”

“Oh ! no, Catch, you do not think so ;—you

think you think. Go and take all the odds you can get upon Goshawk. Come, now, to-morrow you will tell me you have a very pretty book. Eh ! mon cher Catch ?”

“ But, do you really think Goshawk will win ?” asked Lord Catchimwhocan, very earnestly.

“ Certain !”

“ Well, damned if I don’t go and take the odds,” said his Lordship.

“ Mirabel,” said a young noble, moving his horse close to the Count, and speaking in a low voice, “ shall you be at home to-morrow morning ?”

“ Certainly. But what do you want ?”

“ I am in a devil of a scrape ; I do not know what to do. I want you to advise me.”

The Count moved aside with this cavalier. “ And what is it ?” said he. “ Have you been losing ?”

“ No, no,” said the young man, shaking his head. “ Much worse. It is the most infernal

business ; I do not know what I shall do. I think I shall cut my throat."

"Bêtise ! It cannot be very bad, if it be not money."

"O ! my dear Mirabel, you do not know what trouble I am in."

"Mon cher Henri, soyez tranquille," said the Count, in a kind voice. "I am your friend. Rest assured, I will arrange it. Think no more of it until to-morrow at one o'clock, and then call on me. If you like, I am at your service at present."

"No, no—not here : there are letters."

"Ha ! ha ! Well, to-morrow—at one. In the mean time, do not write any nonsense."

At this moment the Duchess, with a party of equestrians, passed and bowed to the Count Mirabel.

"I say, Mirabel," exclaimed a young man, "who is that girl ? I want to know. I have seen her several times lately. By Jove, she is a fine creature !"

“Do not you know Miss Temple?” said the Count. “Fancy a man not knowing Miss Temple! She is the only woman in London to be looked at.”

Now there was a great flutter in the band, and nothing but the name of Miss Temple was heard. All vowed they knew her very well—at least by sight—and never thought of any body else. Some asked the Count to present them—others meditated plans by which that great result might be obtained; but, in the midst of all this agitation, Count Mirabel cantered away, and was soon by the very lady’s side.

“What a charming voyage yesterday,” said the Count to Miss Temple. “You were amused?”

“Very.”

“And to think you should all know my friend Armine so well! I was astonished, for he will never go any where, or speak to any one.”

“You know him very intimately?” said Miss Temple.

“He is my brother! There is not a human being in the world I love so much! If you only knew him as I know him. Ah! chere Miss Temple, there is not a man in London to be compared with him, so clever and so good! What a heart! so tender! and what talent! There is no one so spirituel!”

“You have known him long, Count?”

“Always: but of late I find a great change in him. I cannot discover what is the matter with him. He has grown melancholy. I think he will not live.”

“Indeed!”

“No: I am never wrong. That cher Armine will not live.”

“You are his friend, surely ——”

“Ah! yes; but—I do not know what it is. Even me, he cares not for. I contrive sometimes to get him about a little; yesterday, for instance; but to-day, you see, he will not move. There he is, sitting alone, in a dull hotel, with

his eyes fixed on the ground, dark as night. Never was a man so changed. I suppose something has happened to him abroad. When you first knew him, I dare say now, he was the gayest of the gay?"

"He was indeed very different," said Miss Temple, turning away her face.

"You have known that dear Armine a long time?"

"It seems a very long time," said Miss Temple.

"If he dies, and die he must, I do not think I shall ever be in very good spirits again," said the Count. "It is the only thing that would quite upset me. Now do not you think, Miss Temple, that our cher Armine is the most interesting person you ever met?"

"I believe Captain Armine is admired by all those who know him."

"He is so good, so tender, and so clever Lord Montfort, he knows him very well?"

“ They were companions in boyhood, I believe ; but they have resumed their acquaintance only recently.”

“ We must interest Lord Montfort in his case. Lord Montfort must assist in our endeavours to bring him out a little.”

“ Lord Montfort needs no prompting, Count. We are all alike interested in Captain Armine’s welfare.”

“ I wish you would try to find out what is on his mind,” said Count Mirabel. “ After all, men cannot do much. It requires a more delicate sympathy than we can offer. And yet I would do anything for the cher Armine, because I really love him the same as if he were my brother.”

“ He is fortunate in such a friend.”

“ Ah ! he does not think so any longer,” said the Count, “ he avoids me, he will not tell me any thing. Chere Miss Temple, this business haunts me ; it will end badly. I know that dear Armine so well ; no one knows him like me ; his feelings

are too strong ; no one has such strong feelings. Now, of all my friends, he is the only man I know who is capable of committing suicide."

"God forbid !" said Henrietta Temple, with emphasis.

"I rise every morning with apprehension," said the Count. "When I call upon him, every day, I tremble as I approach his hotel."

"Are you indeed serious ?"

"Most serious. I knew a man once in the same state. It was the Duc de Crillon. He was my brother friend, like this dear Armine. We were at college together ; we were in the same regiment. He was exactly like this dear Armine—young, beautiful, and clever, but with a heart all tenderness, terrible passions. He loved Mademoiselle de Guise, my cousin ; the most beautiful girl in France. Pardon me, but I told Armine yesterday, that you reminded me of her. They were going to be married ; but there was a contretemps. He sent for me ; I was in Spain ; she married the Viscount de

Marsagnac. Until that dreadful morning he remained exactly in the same state as our dear Armine. Never was a melancholy so profound. After the ceremony he shot himself."

"No, no!" exclaimed Miss Temple, in the greatest agitation.

"Perfectly true. It is the terrible recollection of that dreadful adventure that overcomes me when I see our dear friend here. Because I feel it must be love. I was in hopes it was his cousin. But it is not so; it must be something that has happened abroad. Love alone can account for it. It is not his debts that would so overpower him. What are his debts? I would pay them myself. It is a heart-rending business. I am now going to him. How I tremble!"

"How good you are!" exclaimed Miss Temple, with streaming eyes. "I ever shall be grateful; I mean, we all must. Oh! do go to him; go to him directly; tell him to be happy."

"It is the song I ever sing," said the Count
"I wish some of you would come and see him,

or send him a message. It is wise to show him that there are some who take interest in his existence. Now, give me that flower, for instance, and let me give it to him from you."

"He will not care for it," said Miss Temple.

"Try. It is a fancy I have. Let me bear it."

Miss Temple gave the flower to the Count, who cantered off with his prize.

It was about eight o'clock ; Ferdinand was sitting alone in his room, having just parted with Glastonbury, who was going to dine in Brook Street. The sun had set, and yet it was scarcely dark enough for artificial light, particularly for a person without a pursuit. It was just that dreary, dismal moment, when even the most gay grow pensive, if they be alone. And Ferdinand was particularly dull ; a re-action had followed the excitement of the last eight and forty hours, and he was at this moment feeling singularly disconsolate, and upbraiding himself for being so weak as to permit himself to be influenced by

Mirabel's fantastic promises and projects, when his door flew open, and the Count, full-dressed, and graceful as a Versailles Apollo, stood before him.

“Cher ami ! I cannot stop one minute. I dine with Fitzwarrene, and I am late. I have done your business capitally. Here is a pretty flower ! Who do you think gave it me ? She did, pardy. On condition, however, that I should bear it to you, with a message—and what a message !—that you should be happy.”

“Nonsense, my dear Count.”

“It is true ; but I romanced at a fine rate for it. It is the only way with women. She thinks we have known each other since the Deluge. Do not betray me. But, my dear fellow, I cannot stop now. Only, mind, all is changed. Instead of being gay, and seeking her society, and amusing her, and thus attempting to regain your influence, as we talked of last night ; mind, suicide is the system. To-morrow I will tell you all. She has a firm mind and a high spirit,

which she thinks is principle. If we go upon the tack of last night, she will marry Montfort, and fall in love with you afterwards. That will never do. So we must work upon her fears, her generosity, pity, remorse, and so on. It is all planned in my head, but I cannot stop, Call upon me to-morrow morning, at half-past two ; not before, because I have an excellent boy coming to me at one, who is in a scrape. At half-past two, cher, cher Armine, we will talk more. In the mean time, enjoy your flower; and rest assured, that it is your own fault if you do not fling the good Montfort in a very fine ditch."

CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH MR. TEMPLE SURPRISES HIS DAUGHTER
WEeping.

THE Count Mirabel proceeded with his projects with all the ardour, address, and audacity of one habituated to success. By some means or other he contrived to see Miss Temple almost daily. He paid assiduous court to the Duchess, on whom he had made a very favourable impression from the first; in St. James's Square he met Mr. Temple, who was partial to the society of an accomplished foreigner. He was delighted with Count Mirabel. As for Miss Grandison, the Count absolutely made her his confidante, though he concealed this bold step from Ferdinand. He established his intimacy in the three families, and even mystified Sir Ratcliffe and Lady Armine so completely, that they imagined he must be some

acquaintance that Ferdinand had made abroad; and they received him accordingly as one of their son's oldest and most cherished friends. But the most amusing circumstance of all, was, that the Count, who even in business never lost sight of what might divert or interest him, became great friends even with Mr. Glastonbury. Count Mirabel quite comprehended and appreciated that good man's character.

All Count Mirabel's efforts were directed to restore the influence of Ferdinand Armine over Henrietta Temple; and with this view he omitted no opportunity of impressing the idea of his absent friend on that lady's susceptible brain. His virtues, his talents, his accomplishments, his sacrifices; but, above all, his mysterious sufferings, and the fatal end which the Count was convinced awaited him; were placed before her in a light so vivid, that they wholly engrossed her thought and imagination. She could not resist the fascination of talking about Ferdinand Armine to Count Mirabel. He was, indeed,

the constant subject of their discourse. All her feelings, indeed, now clustered round his image. She had quite abandoned her old plan of marrying him to his cousin. That was desperate. Did she regret it? She scarcely dared urge to herself this secret question; and yet it seemed that her heart, too, would break, were Ferdinand another's. But, then, what was to become of him? Was he to be left desolate? Was he indeed to die? And Digby, the amiable, generous Digby—ah! why did she ever meet him? Unfortunate, unhappy woman! And yet she was resolved to be firm; she would not falter; she would be the victim of her duty, even if she died at the altar. Almost she wished that she had ceased to live—and then the recollection of Armine came back to her so vividly! And those long days of passionate delight! All his tenderness, and all his truth; for he had been true to her, always had he been true to her. She was not the person who ought to complain of his conduct. He said so, and he said rightly. And yet she was the person who alone punished him. How different was the

generous conduct of his cousin ! She had pardoned all ; she sympathised with him, she sorrowed for him, she tried to soothe him. She laboured to unite him to her rival. What must he think of herself ? How hard-hearted, how selfish, must the contrast prove her ! Could he indeed believe now that she had ever loved him ? Oh ! no, he must despise her. He must believe that she was sacrificing her heart to the splendour of rank. Oh ! could he believe this ! Her Ferdinand, her romantic Ferdinand, who had thrown fortune and power to the winds, but to gain that very heart ! What a return had she made him ! And for all his fidelity he was punished ; lone, disconsolate, forlorn, overpowered by vulgar cares, heart-broken, meditating even death——. The picture was too terrible, too harrowing. She hid her face in the pillow of the sofa on which she was seated, and wept most bitterly.

She felt an arm softly twined round her waist ; she looked up, it was her father.

“ My child,” he said, “ you are agitated.”

"Yes ; yes ; I am agitated," she said in a low voice.

"You are unwell."

"Worse than unwell."

"Tell me what ails you, Henrietta."

"Grief for which there is no cure."

"Indeed ! I am greatly astonished."

His daughter only sighed.

"Speak to me, Henrietta. Tell me what has happened."

"I cannot speak ; nothing has happened ; I have nothing to say."

"To see you thus makes me most unhappy," said Mr. Temple ; "if only for my sake, let me know the cause of this overwhelming emotion."

"It is a cause that will not please you. Forget, Sir, what you have seen."

"A father cannot. I entreat you, tell me. If you love me, Henrietta, speak."

"Sir, Sir, I was thinking of the past."

"Is it so bitter ?"

"Oh ! God ! that I should live," said Miss Temple.

“Henrietta, my own Henrietta, my child, I beseech you tell me all. Something has occurred, something must have occurred, to revive such strong feelings. Has, has—I know not what to say, but so much happens that surprises me—I know, I have heard, that you have seen one who once influenced your feelings, that you have been thrown in unexpected contact with him—he has not, he has not dared—”

“Say nothing harshly of him,” exclaimed Miss Temple, wildly, “I will not bear it even from you.”

“My daughter!”

“Ay! your daughter, but still a woman. Do I murmur, do I complain? Have I urged you to compromise your honour? I am ready for the sacrifice. My conduct is yours, but my feelings are my own.”

“Sacrifice, Henrietta! What sacrifice? I have heard only of your happiness; I have thought only of your happiness. This is a strange return.”

“ Father, forget what you have seen ; forgive what I have said. But let this subject drop for ever.”

“ It cannot drop here. Captain Armine prefers his suit ? ” continued Mr. Temple, in a tone of stern inquiry.

“ What if he did ? He has a right to do so.”

“ As good a right as he had before. You are rich now, Henrietta, and he perhaps would be faithful.”

“ O ! Ferdinand,” exclaimed Miss Temple, lifting up her hands and eyes to heaven, “ and you must endure even this ! ”

“ Henrietta,” said Mr. Temple, in a voice of affected calmness, as he seated himself by her side. “ Listen to me : I am not a harsh parent ; you cannot upbraid me with insensibility to your feelings. They have ever engrossed my thought and care, and how to gratify, and when necessary how to soothe them, has long been the principal occupation of my life. If you have known misery, girl, you made that misery yourself. It was not I that involved you in secret engage-

ments, and clandestine correspondence; it was not I that made you—you, my daughter, on whom I have lavished all the solicitude of long years—the dupe of the first calculating libertine who dared to trifle with your affections, and betray your heart.”

“ ’Tis false,” exclaimed Miss Temple, interrupting him; “ he is as true and pure as I am; more, much more,” she added, in a voice of anguish.

“ No doubt he has convinced you of it,” said Mr. Temple, with a laughing sneer. “ Now mark me,” he continued, resuming his calm tone, “ you interrupted me; listen to me. You are the betrothed bride of Lord Montfort—Lord Montfort, my friend, the man I love most in the world; the most generous, the most noble, the most virtuous, the most gifted of human beings. You gave him your hand freely, under circumstances which, even if he did not possess every quality that ought to secure the affection of a woman, should bind you to him with an unswerving faith. Falter one jot, and I whistle

you off for ever. You are no more daughter of mine. I am as firm as I am fond; nor would I do this, but that I know well I am doing rightly. Yes! take this Armine once more to your heart, and you receive my curse, the deepest—the sternest—the deadliest that ever descended on a daughter's head.”

“My father, my dear, dear father, my beloved father!” exclaimed Miss Temple, throwing herself at his feet. “Oh! do not say so; oh! recall those words, those wild—those terrible words. Indeed, indeed, my heart is breaking. Pity me, pity me; for God's sake pity me.”

“I would do more than pity you; I would save you.”

“It is not as you think,” she continued, with streaming eyes; “indeed it is not. He has not preferred his suit, he has urged no claim. He has behaved in the most delicate, the most honourable, the most considerate manner. He has thought only of my situation. He met me by accident. My friends are his friends.

They know not what has taken place between us. He has not breathed it to human being. He has absented himself from his home, that we might not meet."

"You must marry Lord Montfort at once."

"O ! my father—even as you like. But do not curse me—dream not of such terrible things—recall those fearful words—love me, love me—say I am your child. And Digby—I am true to Digby—who says I am false to Digby?—But, indeed, can I recall the past, can I alter it? Its memory overcame me. Digby knows all ; Digby knows we met ; he did not curse me—he was kind and gentle. O ! my father !"

"My Henrietta, my beloved Henrietta !" said Mr. Temple, very much moved ; "my child, my darling child !"

"O ! my father ! I will do all you wish ; but speak not again as you have done of Ferdinand. We have done him great injustice ; I have done him great injury. He is good and pure ; indeed he is ; if you knew all, you would not doubt it.

He was ever faithful ; indeed, indeed he was. Once you liked him. Speak kindly of him father. He is the victim. If you meet him, be gentle to him, sir ; for, indeed, if you knew all, you would pity him."

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH FERDINAND HAS A VERY STORMY
INTERVIEW WITH HIS FATHER.

IF we pause now to take a calm and comprehensive review of the state and prospects of the three families, in whose feelings and fortunes we have attempted to interest the reader, it must be confessed that, however brilliant and satisfactory they might appear on the surface, the elements of discord, gloom, and unhappiness might be more profoundly discovered, and indeed might even be held as rapidly stirring into movement. Miss Temple was the affianced bride of Lord Montfort, but her heart was Captain Armine's ; Captain Armine, in the estimation of his parents, was the pledged husband of Miss Grandison, while he and his cousin had, in fact, dissolved

their engagement. Mr. Temple more than suspected his daughter's partiality for Ferdinand. Sir Ratcliffe, very much surprised at seeing so little of his son, and resolved that the marriage should be no further delayed, was about to precipitate confessions, of which he did not dream, and which were to shipwreck all the hopes of his life. The Count Mirabel and Miss Grandison were both engaged in an active conspiracy. Lord Montfort alone was calm, and, if he had a purpose to conceal, inscrutable. All things, however, foreboded a crisis.

Sir Ratcliffe, astonished at the marked manner in which his son absented himself from Brook Street, resolved upon bringing him to an explanation. At first, he thought there might be some lovers' quarrel; but the demeanour of Katherine, and the easy tone in which she ever spoke of her cousin, soon disabused him of this fond hope. He consulted his wife. Now, to tell the truth, Lady Armine, who was a very shrewd woman, was not without her doubts and

perplexities, but she would not confess them to her husband. Many circumstances had been observed by her which filled her with disquietude, but she had staked all her hopes upon this cast, and she was of a very sanguine temper. She was leading an agreeable life. Katherine appeared daily more attached to her, and her ladyship was quite of opinion that it is always very injudicious to interfere. She endeavoured to persuade Sir Ratcliffe that everything was quite right, and she assured him that the season would terminate, as all seasons ought to terminate, by the marriage.

And, perhaps, Sir Ratcliffe would have followed her example, only it so happened that as he was returning home one morning, he met his son in Grosvenor Square.

“ Why, Ferdinand, we never see you now ? ” said Sir Ratcliffe.

“ Oh ! you are all so gay,” said Ferdinand.

“ How is my mother ? ”

“ She is very well. Katherine and herself

have gone to see the balloon, with Lord Montfort and Count Mirabel. Come in," said Sir Ratcliffe, for he was now almost at his door.

The father and son entered. Sir Ratcliffe walked into a little library on the ground floor, which was his morning room.

"We dine at home to-day, Ferdinand," said Sir Ratcliffe. "Perhaps you will come."

"Thank you, Sir, I am engaged."

"It seems to me you are always engaged. For a person who does not like gaiety, it is very odd."

"Heigho!" said Ferdinand. "How do you like your new horse, Sir?"

"Ferdinand, I wish to speak a word to you," said Sir Ratcliffe. "I do not like ever to interfere unnecessarily with your conduct; but the anxiety of a parent will, I think, excuse the question I am about to ask. When do you propose being married?"

"Oh! I do not know exactly."

"Your grandfather has been dead now, you

know, much more than a year. I cannot help thinking your conduct very singular. There is nothing wrong between you and Katherine, is there ? ”

“ Wrong, Sir ? ”

“ Yes, wrong ? I mean is there any misunderstanding ? Have you quarrelled ? ”

“ No, Sir, we have not quarrelled ; we perfectly understand each other.”

“ I am glad to hear it, for I must say I think your conduct is very unlike that of a lover. All I can say is, I did not win your mother’s heart by such proceedings.”

“ Katherine has made no complaint of me, Sir ? ”

“ Certainly not, and that surprises me still more.”

Ferdinand seemed plunged in thought. The silence lasted some minutes. Sir Ratcliffe took up the newspaper ; his son leant over the mantelpiece, and gazed upon the empty fire-place. At length he turned round and said, “ Father’

I can bear this no longer; the engagement between Katherine and myself is dissolved."

"Good God! when, and why?" exclaimed Sir Ratcliffe, the newspaper falling from his hand.

"Long since, Sir; and ever since I loved another woman, and she knew it."

"Ferdinand! Ferdinand!" exclaimed the unhappy father; but he was so overpowered that he could not give utterance to his thoughts. He threw himself in a chair, and wrung his hands. Ferdinand stood still and silent, like a statue of Destiny, gloomy and inflexible.

"Speak again," at length said Sir Ratcliffe. "Let me hear you speak again. I cannot believe what I have heard. Is it, indeed, true that your engagement with your cousin has been long terminated?"

Ferdinand nodded assent.

"Your poor mother!" exclaimed Sir Ratcliffe. "This will kill her." He rose from his seat, and walked up and down the room in the greatest agitation.

“ I knew all was not right,” he muttered to himself. “ She will sink under it ; we must all sink under it. Madman ! you know not what you have done ! ”

“ It is in vain to regret, Sir : my sufferings have been greater than yours.”

“ She will pardon you, my boy,” said Sir Ratcliffe, in a quicker and kinder tone. “ You have lived to repent your impetuous folly ; Katherine is kind and generous ; she loves us all ; she must love you ; she will pardon you. Yes ! entreat her to forget it ; your mother, your mother has great influence with her ; she will exercise it, she will interfere, you are very young, all will yet be well.”

“ It is as impossible for me to marry Katherine Grandison, as for you yourself to do it, Sir,” said Ferdinand, in a tone of great calmness.

“ You are not married to another ? ”

“ In faith ; I am bound by a tie which I can never break.”

“ And who is this person ? ”

“She must be nameless for many reasons.”

“Ferdinand,” said Sir Ratcliffe, “you know not what you are doing. My life, your mother’s, the existence of our family, hang upon your conduct. Yet, yet there is time to prevent this desolation. I am controlling my emotions; I wish to save us—you—all! Throw yourself at your cousin’s feet. She is soft hearted; she may yet be yours!”

“Dear father, it cannot be.”

“Then—then, welcome ruin,” exclaimed Sir Ratcliffe, in a hoarse voice. “And,” he continued, pausing between every word, from the difficulty of utterance, “if the conviction that you have destroyed all our hopes, rewarded us for all our affection, our long devotion, by blasting every fond idea that has ever illumined our sad lives, that I and Constance, poor fools, have clung and clung to, if this conviction can console you, Sir, enjoy it——

“Ferdinand! my son, my child, that I never have spoken an unkind word to, that never gave

me cause to blame or check him, your mother will be home soon, your poor, poor mother. Do not let me welcome her with all this misery. Tell me it is not true; recall what you have said; let us forget these harsh words; reconcile yourself to your cousin; let us be happy."

"Father, if my heart's blood could secure your happiness, my life were ready; but this I cannot do."

"Do you know what is at stake? Everything. All, all, all! We can see Armine no more; our home is gone. Your mother and myself must be exiles. Oh! you have not thought of this; say you have not thought of this."

Ferdinand hid his face—his father, emboldened, urged the fond plea. "You will save us, Ferdinand, you will be our preserver? It is all forgotten, is it not? It is a lovers' quarrel, after all?"

"Father, why should I trifle with your feelings? why should I feign what can never be? This sharp interview, so long postponed, ought

not now to be adjourned. Indulge no hopes; for there are none."

"Then by every sacred power, I revoke every blessing that since your birth I have poured upon your head. I recall the prayers that every night I have invoked upon your being. Great God! I cancel them. You have betrayed your cousin; you have deserted your mother and myself; you have first sullied the honour of our house, and now you have destroyed it. Why were you born? What have we done that your mother's womb should produce such a curse? Sins of my father—they are visited upon me! And Glastonbury, what will Glastonbury say? Glastonbury, who sacrificed his fortune for you."

"Mr. Glastonbury knows all, Sir, and has always been my confidant."

"Is he a traitor? For when a son deserts me, I know not whom to trust."

"He has no thoughts, but for our welfare, Sir.

He will convince you, Sir, I cannot marry my cousin."

"Boy, boy ! you know not what you say. Not marry your cousin ! Then let us die. It were better for us all to die."

"My father ! Be calm, I beseech you ; you have spoken harsh words—I have not deserted you or my mother ; I never will. If I have wronged my cousin, I have severely suffered, and she has most freely forgiven me. She is my dear friend. As for our house ; tell me, would you have that house preserved at the cost of my happiness ? You are not the father I supposed, if such indeed be your wish."

"Happiness ! Fortune, family, beauty, youth, a sweet and charming spirit—if these will not secure a man's happiness, I know not what might. And these I wished you to possess."

"Sir, it is in vain for us to converse upon this subject. See Glastonbury, if you will. He can at least assure you that neither my

feelings are light, nor my conduct hasty. I will leave you now."

Ferdinand quitted the room; Sir Ratcliffe did not notice his departure, although he was not unaware of it. He heaved a deep sigh, and was apparently plunged in profound thought.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FERDINAND IS ARRESTED BY MESSRS. MORRIS
AND LEVISON, AND TAKEN TO A SPUNGING
HOUSE.

It must be confessed that the affairs of our friends were in a critical state: every one interested felt that something decisive in their respective fortunes was at hand. And yet, so vain are all human plans and calculations, that the unavoidable crisis was brought about by an incident which no one anticipated. It so happened that the stormy interview between Sir Ratcliffe and his son was overheard by a servant. This servant, who had been engaged by Miss Grandison in London, was a member of a club to which a confidential clerk of Messrs. Morris and Levison belonged. In the ensuing evening,

when this worthy knight of the shoulder-knot just dropped out for an hour to look in at this choice society, smoke a pipe, and talk over the affairs of his mistress and the nation, he announced the important fact that the match between Miss Grandison and Captain Armine was "no go," which, for his part, he did not regret, as he thought his mistress ought to look higher. The confidential clerk of Messrs. Morris and Levison listened in silence to this important intelligence, and communicated it the next morning to his employers. And so it happened that a very few days afterwards, as Ferdinand was lying in bed at his hotel, the door of his chamber suddenly opened, and an individual, not of the most prepossessing appearance, being very much marked with the small pox, reeking with gin, and wearing top boots and a belcher handkerchief, rushed into his room and inquired whether he were Captain Armine.

"The same," said Ferdinand. "And pray, Sir, who are you?"

“Don’t wish to be unpleasant,” was the answer, “but, Sir, you are my prisoner.”

There is something exceedingly ignoble in an arrest: Ferdinand felt that sickness come over him, which the uninitiated in such ceremonies must experience. However, he rallied and inquired at whose suit these proceedings were taken.

“Messrs Morris and Levison, Sir.”

“Cannot I send for my lawyer and give bail?”

The bailiff shook his head. “You see, Sir, you are taken in execution, so it is impossible.”

“And the amount of the debt?”

“Is £2,800, Sir.”

“Well, what am I to do?”

“Why, Sir, you must go along with us. We will do it very quietly. My follower is in a hackney coach at the door, Sir. You can just step in as pleasant as possible. I suppose you would like to go to a spunging house, and then you can send for your friends, you know.”

“ Well, if you will go down stairs, I will come to you.”

The bailiff grinned. “ Can’t let you out of my sight, Sir.”

“ Why—I cannot dress, if you are here.”

The bailiff examined the room to see if there were any mode of escape ; there was no door but the entrance ; the window offered no chance. “ Well, Sir,” he said, “ I likes to do things pleasant. I can stand outside, Sir, but you must be quick.”

Ferdinand rang for his servant. When Louis clearly understood the state of affairs, he was exceedingly anxious to throw the bailiff out of the window, but his master prevented him. Mr. Glastonbury had gone out some two hours ; Ferdinand sent Louis with a message to his family, to say he was about leaving town for a few days, and impressing upon him to be most careful not to let them know in Brook-street what had occurred, he completed his rapid toilette, and accompanied the sheriff’s officer

to the hackney coach, that was prepared for him.

As they jogged on in silence, Ferdinand revolved in his mind how it would be most advisable for him to act. Any application to his own lawyer was out of the question. That had been tried before, and he felt assured that there was not the slightest chance of that gentleman discharging so large a sum, especially when he was aware that it was only a portion of his client's liabilities; he thought of applying for advice to Count Mirabel or Lord Catchimwhocan, but with what view? He would not borrow the money of them, even if they would lend it; and as it was, he bitterly reproached himself, for having availed himself so easily of Mr. Bond Sharpe's kind offices. At this moment, he could not persuade himself that his conduct had been strictly honourable to that gentleman. He had not been frank in the exposition of his situation. The money had been advanced under a false impression, if not absolutely borrowed under a

false pretence. He cursed Catchimwhocan and his levity. The honour of the Armines was gone, like everything else that once belonged to them. The result of Ferdinand's reflections was that he was utterly done up ; that no hope, or chance of succour, remained for him ; that his career was closed ; and not daring to contemplate what the consequences might be to his miserable parents, he made a desperate effort to command his feelings.

Here the coach turned up a dingy street, leading out of the lower end of Oxford Street, and stopped before a large but gloomy dwelling, which Ferdinand's companion informed him was a spunging house. " I suppose you would like to have a private room, Sir ; you can have every accommodation here, Sir, and feel quite at home, I assure you."

In pursuance of this suggestion, Captain Armine was ushered into the best drawing-room with barred windows, and treated in the most aristocratic manner. It was evidently the chamber reserved only for unfortunate gentlemen

of the utmost distinction. It was amply furnished with a mirror, a loo table, and a very hard sofa. The walls were hung with old-fashioned caricatures by Bunbury, the fire irons were of polished brass, over the mantel piece was the portrait of the master of the house, which was evidently a speaking likeness, and in which Captain Armine fancied he traced no slight resemblance to his friend Mr. Levison, and there were also some sources of literary amusement in the room, in the shape of a Hebrew Bible and the Racing Calendar.

After walking up and down the room for an hour, meditating over the past—for it seemed hopeless to trouble himself any further with the future—Ferdinand began to feel very faint, for it may be recollected that he had not even breakfasted. So pulling the bell rope with such force that it fell to the ground, a funny little waiter immediately appeared, awed by the sovereign ring, and having, indeed, received private intelligence from the bailiff that the

gentleman in the drawing-room was a regular nob.

And here, perhaps, I should remind the reader, that of all the great distinctions in life, none perhaps is more important than that which divides mankind into the two great sections of NOBS and SNOBS. It might seem at the first glance, that if there were a place in the world which should level all distinctions, it would be a debtors' prison. But this would be quite an error. Almost at the very moment that Captain Armine arrived at his sorrowful hotel, a poor devil of a tradesman, who had been arrested for fifty pounds, and torn from his wife and family, had been forced to repair to the same asylum. He was introduced into what is styled the Coffee-room, being a long, low, unfurnished sanded chamber, with a table and benches; and being very anxious to communicate with some friend, in order, if possible, to effect his release, and prevent himself from being a bankrupt, he had continued meekly to ring at intervals for the

last half hour in order that he might write and forward his letter. The waiter heard the coffee-room bell ring, but never dreamed of noticing it, though the moment the signal of the private room sounded, and sounded with so much emphasis, he rushed up stairs, three steps at a time, and instantly appeared before our hero : and all this difference was occasioned by the simple circumstance, that Captain Armine was a NOB, and the poor tradesman, a SNOB.

“I am hungry,” said Ferdinand. “Can I get any thing to eat at this damned place?”

“What would you like, Sir? Any thing you choose, Sir. Mutton chop, rump steak, veal cutlet? Do you a fowl in a quarter of an hour; roast or boiled, Sir?”

“I have not breakfasted yet, bring me some breakfast.”

“Yes, Sir,” said the little waiter. “Tea, Sir? Coffee, eggs, toast, buttered toast, Sir? Like any meat, Sir? Ham, Sir? Tongue, Sir? Like a devil, Sir?”

“Any thing, every thing, only be quick.”

“Yes, Sir,” responded the waiter. “Beg pardon, Sir. No offence, I hope, but custom to pay here, Sir. Shall be happy to accomodate you, Sir. Know what a gentleman is.”

“Thank you, I will not trouble you,” said Ferdinand; “get me that note changed.”

“Yes, Sir,” replied the little waiter, bowing very low as he disappeared.

“Gentleman in best drawing-room wants breakfast. Gentleman in best drawing-room wants change for a ten-pound note. Breakfast immediately for gentleman in best drawing-room. Tea, coffee, toast, ham, tongue, and a devil. A regular nob!”

Ferdinand was so exhausted that he had postponed all deliberation as to his situation until he had breakfasted, and when he had breakfasted, he felt very dull. It is the consequence of all meals. In whatever light he viewed his affairs, they seemed inextricable. He was now in a spunging-house, he could not long

remain here, he must be soon in a gaol. A gaol ! What a bitter termination of all his great plans and hopes ! What a situation for one who had been betrothed to Henrietta Temple ! He thought of his cousin, he thought of her great fortune, which might have been his. Perhaps at this moment they were all riding together in the Park. In a few days all must be known to his father. He did not doubt of the result. Arncliffe would immediately be sold, and his father and mother, with the wretched wreck of their fortune, would retire to the Continent. What a sad vicissitude ! And he had done it all—he their only child, their only hope, on whose image they had lived, who was to restore the house. He looked at the bars of his windows, it was a dreadful sight. His poor father, his fond mother—he was quite sure their hearts would break. They never could survive all this misery, this bitter disappointment of all their hopes. Little less than a year ago and he was at Bath, and they were all joy and

triumph. What a wild scene had his life been since ! O ! Henrietta ! why did we ever meet ? That fatal, fatal morning ! The cedar tree rose before him, he recalled, he remembered every thing. And poor Glastonbury—it was a miserable end. He could not disguise it from himself, he had been most imprudent, he had been mad. And yet so near happiness, perfect, perfect happiness ! Henrietta might have been his, and they might have been so happy ! This confinement was dreadful ; it began to press upon his nerves. No occupation, not the slightest resource. He took up the racing calendar, he threw it down again. He knew all the caricatures by heart, they infinitely disgusted him. He walked up and down the room till he was so tired that he flung himself upon the hard sofa. It was intolerable. A gaol must be preferable to this. There must be some kind of wretched amusement in a gaol ; but this ignoble, this humiliating solitude—he was confident he

should go mad if he remained here. He rang the bell again.

“Yes ! Sir,” said the little waiter.

“This place is intolerable to me,” said Captain Armine. “I really am quite sick of it. What can I do ?”

The waiter looked a little perplexed.

“I should like to go to gaol at once,” said Ferdinand.

“Lord ! Sir !” said the little waiter.

“Yes ! I cannot bear this,” he continued ; “I shall go mad.”

“Don’t you think your friends will call soon, Sir ?”

“I have no friends,” said Ferdinand. “I hope nobody will call.”

“No friends !” said the little waiter, who began to think Ferdinand was not such a nob as he had imagined. “Why, if you have no friends, Sir, it would be best to go to the Fleet, I think.”

“By Jove, I think it would be better.”

“Master thinks your friends will call, I am sure.”

“Nobody knows I am here,” said Ferdinand.

“Oh !” said the little waiter, “You want to let them know, do you, Sir ?”

“Anything sooner ; I wish to conceal my disgrace.”

“Oh ! Sir, you are not used to it—I dare say you never were nabbed before ?”

“Certainly not.”

“There it is; if you will be patient, you will see everything go well.”

“Never, my good fellow; nothing can go well.”

“Oh ! Sir, you are not used to it. A regular nob like you, nabbed for the first time, and for such a long figure, Sir, sure not to be diddled. Never knowed such a thing yet. Friends sure to stump down, Sir.”

“The greater the claim, the more difficulty in satisfying it, I should think,” said Ferdinand.

“Lord ! no, Sir ; you are not used to it. It is only poor devils nabbed for their fifties and hundreds that are ever done up. A nob was never nabbed for the sum you are, Sir, and ever went to the wall. Trust my experience, I never knowed such a thing.”

Ferdinand could scarcely refrain from a smile. Even the conversation of the little waiter was a relief to him.

“ You see, Sir,” continued that worthy, “ Morris and Levison would never have given you such a —— of a tick unless they knowed your resources. Trust Morris and Levison for that. You done up, Sir ! a nob like you, that Morris and Levison have trusted for such a tick ! Lord ! Sir, you don’t know nothing about it. I could afford to give them fifteen shillings in the pound for their debt myself, and a good day’s business too. Friends will stump down, Sir, trust me.”

“ Well, it is some satisfaction for me to know that they will not, and that Morris and Levison will not get a farthing.”

“ Well, Sir,” said the incredulous little functionary, “ when I find Morris and Levison lose two or three thousand pounds by a nob who is nabbed for the first time, I will pay the money myself, that is all I know.”

Here the waiter was obliged to leave Ferdinand, but he proved his confidence in that gentleman's fortunes by his continual civility, and in the course of the day brought him a stale newspaper. It seemed to Ferdinand that the day would never close. The waiter pestered him about dinner, eulogising the cook, and assuring him that his master was famous for champagne. Although he had no appetite, Ferdinand ordered dinner in order to ensure the occurrence of one incident. The champagne made him drowsy ; he was shown to his room ; and for a while he forgot his cares in sleep.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CRISIS RAPIDLY ADVANCES.

HENRIETTA TEMPLE began once more to droop. This change was not unnoticed by her constant companion, Lord Montfort—and yet he never permitted her to be aware of his observation. All that he did was still more to study her amusement; if possible, to be still more considerate and tender. Miss Grandison, however, was far less delicate; she omitted no opportunity of letting Miss Temple know that she thought that Henrietta was very unwell, and that she was quite convinced Henrietta was thinking of Ferdinand. Nay! she was not satisfied to confine these intimations to Miss Temple—she impressed her conviction of Henrietta's indispo-

sition on Lord Montfort, and teased him with asking his opinion of the cause.

“What do you think is the cause, Miss Grandison?” said his Lordship, very quietly.

“Perhaps London does not agree with her ; but then, when she was ill before, she was in the country ; and it seems to me to be the same illness. I wonder you do not notice it, Lord Montfort. A lover to be so insensible—I am surprised !”

“It is useless to notice that which you cannot remedy.”

“Why do not you call in those who can offer remedies?” said Miss Grandison. “Why not send for Sir Henry ?”

“I think it is best to leave Henrietta alone,” said Lord Montfort.

“Do you think it is the mind, then ?” said Miss Grandison.

“It may be,” said Lord Montfort.

“It may be ! Upon my word, you are very easy.”

“ I am not indifferent, Miss Grandison. There is nothing that I would not do for Henrietta’s welfare.”

“ Oh ! yes, there is ; there is something,” said Miss Grandison, rather maliciously.

“ You are really a very extraordinary person, Miss Grandison,” said Lord Montfort. “ What can you mean by so strange an observation ?”

“ I have my meaning ; but I suppose I may have a mystery as well as anybody else.”

“ A mystery, Miss Grandison ?”

“ Yes ! a mystery, Lord Montfort. There is not a single individual in the three families who has not a mystery, except myself ; but I have found out something. I feel quite easy now—we are all upon an equality.”

“ You are a very strange person.”

“ It may be so ; but I am very happy, for I have nothing on my mind. Now that poor Ferdinand has told Sir Ratcliffe we are not going to marry, I have no part to play. I hate de-

ception ; it is almost as bitter as marrying one who is in love with another person."

"That must indeed be bitter. And is that the reason that you do not marry your cousin?" inquired Lord Montfort.

"I may be in love with another person, or I may not," said Miss Grandison. "But however that may be, the moment Ferdinand very candidly told me he was, we decided not to marry. I think we were very wise—do not you, Lord Montfort?"

"If you are happy, you were wise?" said Lord Montfort.

"Yes, I am pretty happy—as happy as I can well be, when all my best friends are miserable."

"Are they?"

"I think so: my aunt is in tears; my uncle in despair; Ferdinand meditates suicide; Henrietta is pining away; and you—you, who are the philosopher of the society—you look rather grave. I fancy I think we are a most miserable set."

“I wish we could be all very happy,” said Lord Montfort.

“And so we might, I think,” said Miss Grandison, “at least some of us.”

“Make us then,” said Lord Montfort.

“I cannot make you.”

“I think you could, Miss Grandison.”

At this moment Henrietta entered, and the conversation assumed a different turn.

“Will you go with us to Lady Bellair’s, Kate?” said Miss Temple. “The Duchess has asked me to call there this morning.”

Miss Grandison expressed her willingness; the carriage was waiting, and Lord Montfort offered to attend them. At this moment, the servant entered with a note for Miss Grandison.

“From Glastonbury,” she said; “dear Henrietta, he wishes to see me immediately. What can it be? Go to Lady Bellair’s, and call for me on your return. You must, indeed. And then we can all go out together.”

And so it was arranged. Miss Temple, ac-

accompanied by Lord Montfort, proceeded to Bel-lair House.

“Don’t come near me,” said the old lady when she saw them, “don’t come near me ; I am in despair ; I do not know what I shall do ; I think I shall sell all my china. Do you know anybody who wants to buy old china ? They shall have it a bargain. But I must have ready money ; ready money I must have. Do not sit down in that chair ; it is only made to look at. —Oh ! if I were rich like you !—I wonder if my china is worth three hundred pounds. I could cry my eyes out, that I could. The wicked men—I should like to tear them to pieces. Why is not he in Parliament ; and then they could not take him up ? They never could arrest Charles Fox. I have known him in as much trouble as any one. Once he sent all his furniture to my house from his lodgings. He lodged in Bury Street. I always look at the house when I pass by. Don’t fiddle the pens ; I hate people who fiddle. Where is Gregory ?—where is my bell ?

Where is the page?—naughty boy! why do not you come? There, I do not want anything—I do not know what to do. The wicked men! The greatest favourite I had—he was so charming! Charming people are never rich—he always looked melancholy—I think I will send to the rich man I dine with—but I forget his name. Why do not you tell me his name?”

“My dear Lady Bellair, what is the matter?”

“Don’t ask me; don’t speak to me. I tell you I am in despair. Oh! if I were rich! how I would punish those wicked men!”

“Can I do anything?” said Lord Montfort.

“I do not know what you can do. I have got the tic. I always have the tic when my friends are in trouble.”

“Who is in trouble, Lady Bellair?”

“My dearest friend; the only friend I care about. How can you be so hard-hearted? I called upon him this morning, and his servant was crying. I must get him a place. He is such a good man, and loves his master. Now

do you want a servant? You never want anything. Ask every body you know whether they want a servant, an honest man, who loves his master. There he is crying down stairs in Gregory's room. Poor good creature! I could cry myself, only it is of no use."

"Who is his master?" said Lord Montfort.

"Nobody you know—yes! you know him very well. It is my dear, dear friend—you know him very well. The bailiffs went to his hotel yesterday, and dragged him out of bed, and took him to prison. Oh! I shall go quite distracted. I want to sell my china to pay his debts. Where is Miss Twoshoes?" continued her ladyship; "why don't you answer? You do everything to plague me."

"Miss Grandison, Lady Bellair?"

"To be sure; it is her lover."

"Captain Armine?"

"Have I not been telling you all this time? They have taken him to prison."

Miss Temple rose and left the room.

“ Poor creature, she is quite shocked. She knows him, too,” said her Ladyship. “ I am afraid he is quite ruined. There is a knock, I will make a subscription for him. I dare say it is my grandson. He is very rich, and very good-natured.”

“ My dear Lady Bellair,” said Lord Montfort, rising, “ favour me by not saying a word to anybody at present. I will just go in the next room to Henrietta. She is very intimate with the family, and very much affected. Now, my dear lady, I entreat you,” continued his Lordship, “ do not say a word. Captain Armine has very good friends, but do not speak to strangers. It will do harm, it will indeed.”

“ You are a good creature, you are a good creature ; go away.”

“ Lady Frederick Berrington, my lady,” announced the page.

“ She is very witty, but very poor. It is no use speaking to her. I won’t say a word. Go to Miss Thingabob—go, go.” And Lord

Montfort escaped into the saloon as Lady Frederick entered.

Henrietta was lying on the sofa, her countenance was hid, she was sobbing convulsively.

“Henrietta,” said Lord Montfort, but she did not answer. “Henrietta,” he again said, “dear Henrietta! I will do whatever you wish.”

“Save him, save him!” she exclaimed. “Oh! you cannot save him! And I have brought him to this! Ferdinand! dearest Ferdinand! oh! I shall die!”

“For God’s sake, be calm,” said Lord Montfort, “there is nothing I will not do for you, for him.”

“Ferdinand, Ferdinand, my own, own Ferdinand, oh! why did we ever part? Why was I so unjust, so wicked? And he was true! I cannot survive his disgrace and misery. I wish to die!”

“There shall be no disgrace, no misery,” said Lord Montfort, “only, for God’s sake, be calm. There is a chattering woman in the next

room. Hush! hush! I tell you I will do everything."

"You cannot; you must not; you ought not! O! Digby, kind, generous Digby! Pardon what I have said; forget it; but indeed I am so wretched, I can bear this life no longer."

"But, you shall not be wretched, Henrietta; you shall be happy; every body shall be happy. I am Armine's friend, I am indeed. I will prove it. On my honour I will prove that I am his best friend."

"O! Digby, will you though? And yet you must not. You are the last person, you are indeed. He is so proud! Anything from us will be death to him. Yes! I know him, he will die sooner than be under an obligation to either of us."

"You shall place him under still greater obligations than this," said Lord Montfort. "Yes! Henrietta, if he have been true to you, you shall not be false to him."

"Digby, Digby, speak not such strange

words. I am myself again. I left you that I might be alone. Best and most generous of men, I have never deceived you; pardon the emotions that even you were not to witness."

"Take my arm, dearest, let us walk into the garden. I wish to speak to you. Do not tremble. I have nothing to say that is not for your happiness; at all times, and under all circumstances, the great object of my thoughts."

He raised Miss Temple gently from the sofa, and they walked away far from the observation of Lady Bellair, or the auricular powers, though they were not inconsiderable, of her lively guest.

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH FERDINAND RECEIVES MORE THAN ONE VISIT, AND FINDS THAT ADVERSITY HAS NOT QUITE DEPRIVED HIM OF HIS FRIENDS.

IN the meantime morning broke upon the unfortunate Ferdinand. He had forgotten his cares in sleep, and, when he woke, it was with some difficulty that he recalled the unlucky incident of yesterday, and could satisfy himself that he was indeed a prisoner. But the bars of his bed-room window left him not very long in pleasing doubt.

His friend, the little waiter, soon made his appearance. "Slept pretty well, Sir? Same breakfast as yesterday, Sir? Tongue and

ham, Sir? Perhaps you would like a kidney instead of a devil. It will be a little change."

"Oh! I have no appetite."

"It will come, Sir. You an't used to it. Nothing else to do here but to eat. Better try the kidney, Sir? Is there any thing you fancy?"

"I have made up my mind to go to gaol to-day."

"Lord! Sir, don't think of it. Something will turn up, Sir, take my word."

And sooth to say, the experienced waiter was not wrong. For bringing in the breakfast, followed by an underling with a great pomp of plated covers, he informed Ferdinand with a chuckle, that a gentleman was inquiring for him. "Told you your friends would come, Sir."

The gentleman was introduced, and Ferdinand beheld Mr. Glastonbury.

"My dear Glastonbury," said Ferdinand, scarcely daring to meet his glance, "this is

very kind, and yet I wished to have saved you this."

"My poor child," said Glastonbury.

"Oh! my dear friend, it is all over. This is a more bitter moment for you even than for me, kind friend. This is a terrible termination of all your zeal and labours."

"Nay!" said the old gentleman; "let us not think of anything but the present. For what are you held in durance?"

"My dear Glastonbury, if it were only ten pounds, I could not permit you to pay it. So let us not talk of that. This must have happened sooner or later. It has come, and come unexpectedly; but it must be borne, like all other calamities."

"But you have friends, my Ferdinand."

"Would that I had not! All that I wish now is that I were alone in the world. If I could hope that my parents would leave me to myself, I should be comparatively easy. But when I think of them, and the injury I must do them, it is hell, it is hell."

“ I wish you would tell me your exact situation,” said Mr. Glastonbury.

“ Do not let us talk of it; does my father know of this ? ”

“ Not yet.”

“ 'Tis well ; he may yet have a happy day. He will sell Armine.”

Glastonbury shook his head and sighed. “ Is it so bad ? ” he said.

“ My dearest friend, if you will know the worst, take it. I am here for nearly three thousand pounds, and I owe at least ten more.”

“ And they will not take bail ? ”

“ Not for this debt; they cannot. It is a judgment debt, the only one.”

“ And they gave you no notice ? ”

“ None : they must have heard some how or other that my infernal marriage was off. They have all waited for that. And now that you see that affairs are past remedy, let us talk of other topics, if you will be so kind as to remain half an hour in this dungeon. I shall quit it directly ; I shall go to gaol at once.”

Poor Glastonbury, he did not like to go, and yet it was a most melancholy visit. What could they converse about? Conversation, except on the interdicted subject of Ferdinand's affairs, seemed quite a mockery. At last Ferdinand said, "Dear Glastonbury, do not stay here; it only makes us both unhappy. Send Louis with some clothes for me, and some books. I will let you know before I leave this place. Upon reflection, I shall not do so for two or three days, if I can stay as long. See my lawyer, not that he will do anything, nor can I expect him, but he may as well call and see me. Adieu, dear friend."

Glastonbury was about to retire, when Ferdinand called him back. "This affair should be kept quiet," he said. "I told Louis to say I was out of town in Brook Street. I should be sorry were Miss Temple to hear of it, at least until after her marriage."

Ferdinand was once more alone with the mirror, the loo table, the hard sofa, the carica-

tures which he hated even worse than his host's portrait, the Hebrew bible, and the racing calendar. It seemed a year that he had been shut up in this apartment, instead of a day, he had grown so familiar with every object. And yet the visit of Glastonbury had been an event, and he could not refrain from pondering over it. A spunging house seemed such a strange, such an unnatural scene, for such a character. Ferdinand recalled to his memory the tower at Armine, and all its glades and groves, shining in the summer sun, and freshened by the summer breeze. What a contrast to this dingy, confined, close dungeon ! And was it possible, that he had ever wandered at will in that fair scene with a companion fairer ? Such thoughts might well drive a man mad. With all his errors, and all his disposition at present not to extenuate them, Ferdinand Armine could not refrain from esteeming himself unlucky. Perhaps it is more distressing to believe ourselves unfortunate, than to recognise ourselves as imprudent.

A fond mistress or a faithful friend—either of these are great blessings; and whatever may be one's scrapes in life, either of these may well be sources of consolation. Ferdinand had a fond mistress once, and had Henrietta Temple loved him, why he might struggle with all these calamities; but that sweet dream was past. As for friends, he had none, at least he thought not. Not that he had to complain of human nature. He had experienced much kindness from mankind, and many were the services he had received from kind acquaintance. With the recollection of Catch, to say nothing of Bond Sharpe, and above all Count Mirabel, fresh in his mind, he could not complain of his companions. Glastonbury was indeed a friend, but Ferdinand sighed for a friend of his own age, knit to him by the same tastes and sympathies, and capable of comprehending all his secret feelings; a friend who could even whisper hope, and smile in a spunging house.

The day wore away, the twilight shades were

descending, Ferdinand became every moment more melancholy, when suddenly his constant ally, the waiter, rushed into the room. "My eye, Sir, here is a regular nob inquiring for you. I told you it would be all right."

"Who is it?"

"Here he is coming up."

Ferdinand caught the triumphant tones of Mirabel on the staircase.

"Which is the room? Show me directly. Ah! Armine, mon ami! mon cher! Is this your friendship? To be in this cursed hole, and not send for me! C'est une mauvaise plaisanterie to pretend we are friends! How are you, good fellow, fine fellow, excellent Armine? If you were not here I would quarrel with you. There, go away, man." The waiter disappeared, and Count Mirabel seated himself on the hard sofa.

"My dear fellow," continued the Count, twirling the prettiest cane in the world, "this is

a bêtise of you to be here and not send for me. Who has put you here ? ”

“ My dear Mirabel, it is all up.”

“ Bêtise ! How much is it ? ”

“ I tell you I am done up. It has got about that the marriage is off, and Morris and Levison have nabbed me for all the arrears of my cursed annuities.”

“ But how much ? ”

“ Between two and three thousand.”

The Count Mirabel gave a whistle.

“ I brought five hundred, which I have. We must get the rest somehow or other.”

“ My dear Mirabel, you are the most generous fellow in the world ; but I have troubled my friends too much. Nothing will induce me to take a sous from you. Besides, between ourselves, not my least mortification at this moment, is some 1500*l.*, which Bond Sharpe let me have the other day for nothing, through Catch.”

“ Pah ! I am sorry about that though, because

he would have lent us this money. I will ask Bevil."

"I would sooner die."

"I will ask him for myself."

"It is impossible."

"We will arrange it: I tell you who will do it for us. He is a good fellow and immensely rich—it is Fitzwarrene; he owes me great favours."

"Dear Mirabel, I am delighted to see you. This is good and kind. I am so damned dull here. It quite gladdens me to see you; but do not talk about money."

"Here is 500*l.*; four other fellows at 500*l.*, we can manage it."

"No more, no more! I beseech you."

"But you cannot stop here. Quel drôle appartement! Before Charley Doricourt was in Parliament he was always in these sort of houses, but I got him out some how or other; I managed it. Once I bought of the fellow five hundred dozen of champagne."

“ A new way to pay old debts, certainly,” said Ferdinand, smiling.

“ I tell you, have you dined ? ”

“ I was going to ; merely to have something to do.”

“ I will stop and dine with you,” said the Count, ringing the bell, “ and we will talk over affairs. Laugh, my friend ; laugh, my Armine ; this is only a scene. This is life. What can we have for dinner, man ? I shall dine here.”

“ Gentleman’s dinner is ordered, my Lord ; quite ready,” said the waiter. “ Champagne in ice, my Lord ? ”

“ To be sure ; every thing that is good. Mon cher Armine, we shall have some fun.”

“ Yes, my Lord,” said the waiter, running down stairs. “ Dinner for best drawing-room directly, green pea soup, turbot, beef-steak, roast duck, and boiled chicken, every thing that is good, champagne in ice, two regular nobs ! ”

The dinner soon appeared, and the two friends seated themselves.

“Potage admirable!” said Count Mirabel.
“The best champagne I ever drank in my life! Mon brave, your health. This must be Charley’s man, by the wine. I think we will have him up; he will lend us some money. Finest turbot I ever eat! I will give you some of the fins. Ah! you are glad to see me, my Armine, you are glad to see your friend? Encore champaign! Good Armine, excellent Armine! Keep up your spirits, I will manage these fellows. You must take some bifteak. The most tender bifteak I ever tasted! This is a fine dinner. Encore un verre! Man, you may go—don’t wait.”

“By Jove, Mirabel, I never was so glad to see any body in my life. Now you are a friend, I feel quite in spirits!”

“To be sure! always be in spirits. C’est une bêtise not to be in spirits. Everything is sure to go well. You will see how I will manage these fellows, and I will come and dine with you every day, until you are out—you shall not be here

eight-and-forty hours. As I go home, I will stop at Mitchell's, and get you a novel by Paul de Köck. Have you ever read Paul de Köck's books?"

"Never!" said Ferdinand.

"What a fortunate man to be arrested! Now you can read Paul de Köck. You must absolutely read Paul de Köck. C'est une bêtise, not to read Paul de Köck. By Jove, you are the most lucky fellow I know. You see you thought yourself very miserable in being arrested. 'Tis the finest thing in the world, for now you will read *Mon Voisin Raymond*. There are always two sides to a case."

"I am content to believe myself very lucky in having such a friend as you," said Ferdinand; "but now as these things are cleared away, let us talk over affairs. Have you seen Henrietta?"

"Of course, I see her every day."

"I hope she will not know of my crash, until she has married."

"She will not, unless you tell her."

“And when do you think she will be married?”

“When you please.”

“Cher ami ! point de moquerie!”

“By Jove I am quite serious,” exclaimed the Count. “I am as certain that you will marry her as that we are in this damned spunging house.”

“Nonsense!”

“The very finest sense in the world. If you will not marry her, I will myself, for I am resolved that good Montfort shall not. It shall never be said that I interfered without a result. Why, if she were to marry Montfort now, it would ruin my character. To marry Montfort, after all my trouble—dining with that good Temple, and opening the mind of that little Grandison, and talking fine things to that good Duchess—it would be a bêtise.”

“What an odd fellow you are, Mirabel!”

“Of course ! Would you have me like other people and not odd ? We will drink la belle Henriette ! Fill up ! You will be my friend,

when you are married, eh? Mon Armine, excellent garçon! How we shall laugh some day; and then this dinner, this dinner will be the best dinner we ever had!"

"But why do you think there is the slightest hope of Henrietta not marrying Montfort?"

"Because my knowledge of human nature assures me that a young woman, very beautiful, very rich, with a very high spirit, and an only daughter, will never go and marry one man when she is in love with another, and that other one, my dear fellow, like you. You are more sure of getting her because she is engaged."

What a wonderful thing is a knowledge of human nature! thought Ferdinand to himself. The Count's knowledge of human nature is like my friend the waiter's experience. One assures me that I am certain to marry a woman because she is engaged to another person, and the other, that it is quite clear my debts will be paid because they are so very large.

The Count remained with his friend until

eleven o'clock, when everybody was locked up. He invited himself to dine with him to-morrow, and promised that he should have a whole collection of French novels before he awoke. And assuring him over and over again that he looked upon him as the most fortunate of all his friends, and that if he broke the bank at Crocky's to-night, which he fancied he should, he would send him two or three thousand pounds, at the same time he shook him heartily by the hand, and descended the staircase of the spunging-house, humming *Vive la Bagatelle!*

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CRISIS.

ALTHOUGH, when Ferdinand was once more left alone to his reflections, it did not appear to him that anything had, indeed, occurred which should change his opinion of his forlorn lot,—there was something, nevertheless, very inspiring in the visit of his friend Count Mirabel. It did not seem to him, indeed, that he was one whit nearer extrication from his difficulties than before; and as for the wild hopes as to Henrietta, he dismissed them from his mind as the mere fantastic schemes of a sanguine spirit, and yet his gloom, by some process difficult to analyze, had in great measure departed. It

could not be the champagne, for that was a remedy he had previously tried ; it was in some degree doubtless the magic sympathy of a joyous temperament : but chiefly it might, perhaps, be ascribed to the flattering conviction that he possessed the hearty friendship of a man, whose good will was, in every view of the case, a very enviable possession. With such a friend as Mirabel, he could not deem himself quite so unlucky as in the morning. If he were fortunate, and fortunate so unexpectedly, in this instance, he might be so in others. A vague presentiment that he had seen the worst of life, came over him. It was equally in vain to justify the consoling conviction, or to resist it ; and Ferdinand Armine, although in a spunging-house, fell asleep in better humour with his destiny than he had been for the last eight months.

His dreams were charming : he fancied that he was at Armine, standing by the Barbary rose tree. It was moonlight ; it was, perhaps, a slight recollection of the night he had looked upon the

garden from the window of his chamber ; the night after he had first seen Henrietta. Suddenly Henrietta Temple appeared at his window, and waved her hand to him with a smiling face. He immediately plucked for her a flower, and stood with his offering beneath the window. She was in a riding habit, and she told him that she had just returned from Italy. He invited her to descend, and she disappeared ; but instead of Henrietta, there came forward from the old Place—the Duchess, who immediately inquired whether he had seen his cousin ; and then her Grace, by some confused process common in dreams, turned into Glastonbury, and pointed to the rose tree, where, to his surprise, Katherine was walking with Lord Montfort. Ferdinand called out for Henrietta, but, as she did not appear, he entered the Place, where he found Count Mirabel dining by himself, and just drinking a glass of champagne. He complained to Mirabel that Henrietta had disappeared, but his friend laughed at him, and said that, after

such a long ride, leaving Italy only yesterday, he could scarcely expect to see her. Satisfied with this explanation, Ferdinand joined the Count at his banquet, and was woke from his sleep and his dream apparently by Mirabel drawing a cork.

Ah! why did he ever wake? It was so real; he had seen her so plainly; it was life; it was the very smile she wore at Ducie; that sunny glance, so full of joy, beauty, and love, which he could live to gaze on! And now he was in prison, and she was going to be married to another. Oh! there are things in this world that may well break hearts!

The cork of Count Mirabel was, however, a substantial sound—a gentle tap at his door: he answered it, and the waiter entered his chamber.

“Beg pardon, Sir, for disturbing you; only eight o’clock.”

“Then why the deuse do you disturb me?”

“There has been another nob, Sir. I said as how you were not up, and he sent his compli-

pliments, and said as how he would call in an hour, as he wished to see you particular."

"Was it the Count?"

"No, Sir; but it was a regular nob, Sir, for he had a coronet on his cab. But he would not leave his name."

"Catch, of course," thought Ferdinand to himself. "And sent by Mirabel. I should not wonder if, after all, they have broken the bank at Crocky's. Nothing shall induce me to take a ducat."

However, Ferdinand thought fit to rise, and contrived to descend to the best drawing-room about a quarter of an hour after the appointed time. To his extreme surprise, he found Lord Montfort.

"My dear friend," said Lord Montfort, looking a little confused, "I am afraid I have sadly disturbed you. But I could not contrive to find you yesterday until it was so late, that I was ashamed to knock them up here, and I thought, therefore, you would excuse this early call, as—

—as—as—I wished to see you very much indeed.”

“ You are extremely kind,” said Captain Armine. “ But really I very much regret that your Lordship should have had all this trouble.”

“ Oh ! what is trouble under such circumstances ! ” replied his Lordship. “ I cannot pardon myself for being so stupid as not reaching you yesterday. I never can excuse myself for the inconvenience you have experienced.”

Ferdinand bowed, but was so perplexed that he could not say a word.

“ I hope, my dear Armine,” said his Lordship advancing rather slowly, putting his arm within that of Ferdinand, and then walking up and down the room together—“ I hope you will act at this moment towards me as I would towards you, were our respective situations changed ? ”

Ferdinand bowed, but said nothing.

“ Money, you know, my good fellow,” continued Lord Montfort, “ is a disagreeable thing

to talk about, but there are circumstances which should deprive such conversation between us of any awkwardness which otherwise might arise."

"I am not aware of them, my Lord," said Ferdinand, "though your good feelings command my gratitude."

"I think, upon reflection, we shall find that there are some," said Lord Montfort. "For the moment I will only hope that you will esteem those good feelings—and which, on my part, I am anxious should ripen into the most sincere and intimate friendship—as sufficient authority for my placing your affairs in general, in that state, that they may in future never deprive your family and friends of society necessary to their happiness."

"My Lord, I am sure that adversity has assumed a very graceful hue with me; for it has confirmed my most amiable views of human nature. I shall not attempt to express what I feel towards your Lordship for this generous goodness, but I will say I am profoundly im-

pressed with it ; not the less, because I cannot avail myself in the slightest degree of your offer."

" You are too much a man of the world, I am sure, my dear Armine, to be offended by my frankness. I shall therefore speak without fear of misconception. It does appear to me that the offer which I have made you is worthy of a little more consideration. You see, my dear friend, that you have placed yourself in such a situation that, however you may act, the result cannot be one completely satisfactory. The course you should pursue, therefore—as, indeed, all conduct in this world should be—is a matter of nice calculation. Have you well considered the consequences of your rushing upon ruin ? In the first place, your family will receive a blow from which even future prosperity may not recover them. Your family estate, already in a delicate position, may be irrecoverably lost ; the worldly consequences of such a vicissitude are very considerable ; whatever career you pursue, as

long as you visibly possess Armine, you rank always among the aristocracy of the land, and a family that maintains such a position, however decayed, will ultimately recover. I hardly know an exception to this rule; I do not think, of all men, that you are most calculated to afford one."

"What you say has long pressed itself upon us," said Captain Armine.

"Then, again," resumed Lord Montfort, "the feelings and even interests of your friends are to be considered. Poor Glastonbury! I love that old man myself. The fall of Armine might break his heart; he would not like to leave his tower. You see I know your place."

"Poor Glastonbury!" said Ferdinand.

"But above all," continued Lord Montfort, "the happiness, nay, the very health and life of your parents, from whom all is now concealed, would perhaps be the last and costliest sacrifices of your rashness."

Ferdinand threw himself on the sofa and covered his face.

“ Yet all this misery, all these misfortunes, may be avoided, and you yourself become a calm and happy man, by—for I wish not to understate your view of the subject, Armine—putting yourself under a pecuniary obligation to me. A circumstance to be avoided in the common course of life, no doubt; but is it better to owe me a favour and save your family estate, preserve your position, maintain your friend, and prevent the misery, and probable death, of your parents, or be able to pass me in the street, in haughty silence if you please, with the consciousness that the luxury of your pride has been satisfied at the cost of every circumstance which makes existence desirable ? ”

“ You put the case strongly,” said Ferdinand; “ but no reasoning can ever persuade me that I am justified in borrowing £13,000, which I can never repay.”

“ Accept it then.”

“ ’Tis the same thing,” said Ferdinand.

“ I think not,” said Lord Montfort ; “ but why do you say ‘ never ’ ? ”

“ Because it is utterly impossible that I ever can.”

“ How do you know you may not marry a woman of immense fortune ? ” said Lord Montfort. “ Now you seem to me exactly the sort of man who would marry an heiress.”

“ You are thinking of my cousin,” said Ferdinand. “ I thought that you had discovered, or that you might have learnt, that there was no real intention of our union.”

“ No, I was not thinking of your cousin,” said Lord Montfort, “ though, to tell you the truth, I was once in hopes that you would marry her. However, that I well know is entirely out of the question, for I believe Miss Grandison will marry some one else.”

“ Indeed ! ” exclaimed Ferdinand, a little agitated. “ Well ! may she be happy ! She deserves happiness. I love Kate from the bot-

tom of my heart. But who is the fortunate fellow ? ”

“ ’Tis a lady’s secret,” said Lord Montfort. “ But let us return to our argument. To be brief ; either, my dear Armine, you must be convinced by my reasoning, or I must remain here a prisoner like yourself ; for to tell you the truth, there is a fair lady, before whom I cannot present myself, except in your company.”

Ferdinand changed countenance. There wanted but this to confirm his resolution, which had scarcely wavered. To owe his release to Henrietta’s influence with Lord Montfort, it was too degrading.

“ My Lord,” he said, “ you have touched upon a string that I had hoped might have been spared me. This conversation must indeed cease. My mouth is sealed from giving you the reasons, which nevertheless render it imperative on me to decline your generous offer.”

“ Well then,” said Lord Montfort, “ I must see if another can be more successful,” and he held forth a note to the astounded Ferdinand, in

Henrietta's writing. It dropped from Ferdinand's hand as he took it. Lord Montfort picked it up, gave it him again, and walked to the other end of the room. It was with extreme difficulty that Ferdinand prevailed on himself to break the seal. The note was very short; the hand that had traced the letters must have trembled. Thus it ran.

"Dearest Ferdinand.

*Do every thing that Digby wishes. He is
our best friend. God bless you !*

Your faithful Henrietta.

*Digby is going to marry Katherine—are not you
glad ? "*

Lord Montfort looked round; Ferdinand Armine was lying senseless on the sofa.

Our friend was not of a swooning mood, but we think the circumstances may excuse the weakness.

As for the young nobleman, he rang the bell for the little waiter, who, the moment he saw

what had occurred, hurried away and rushed up stairs again with cold water, a bottle of brandy, and a blazing sheet of brown paper, which he declared was an infallible specific. By some means or other, Ferdinand was in time recovered, and the little waiter was fairly expelled.

“ My dear friend,” said Ferdinand, in a faint voice, “ I am the happiest man that ever lived ; I hope you will be, I am sure you will be— Katherine is an angel. But I cannot speak. It is so strange.”

“ My dear fellow, you really must take a glass of brandy,” said Lord Montfort, “ It is very strange certainly. But we are all very happy.”

“ I hardly know where I am,” said Ferdinand, after a few minutes, “ Am I really alive ? ”

“ Let us think how we are to get out of this place. I suppose they will take my cheque. If not, I must be off.”

“ Oh ! do not go,” said Ferdinand. “ If you go I shall not believe it is true. My dear Montfort, is it really true ? ”

“ You see, my dear Armine,” said Lord Montfort, smiling, “ it was fated that I should marry a lady you rejected. And to tell you the truth, the reason why I did not get to you yesterday, as I ought to have done, was an unexpected conversation I had with Miss Grandison. I really think this arrest was a most fortunate incident. It brought affairs to a crisis. We should have gone on playing at cross purposes for ever.”

Here the little waiter entered again with a note and a packet.

“ The same messenger brought them ? ” asked Ferdinand.

“ No, Sir ; the Count’s servant brought the note, and waits for an answer ; the packet came by another person.”

Ferdinand opened the note and read as follows : —

Berkeley Square, half-past 7 morning.

Mon ami !

Best joke in the world ! I broke Crochy’s bank three times. Of course ; I told you so ! Then

went out and broke three or four small hells. I win 15,000l. Directly I am awake I will send you the three thousand, and I will lend you the rest till your marriage. It will not be very long. I write this before I go to bed, that you may have it early. Adieu, cher ami !

Votre affectioné,

De Mirabel.

“ My arrest was certainly the luckiest incident in the world,” said Ferdinand, handing the note to Lord Montfort. “ Mirabel dined here yesterday, and went and played on purpose to save me. I treated it as a joke. But what is this ? ” Ferdinand opened the packet. The handwriting was unknown to him. Ten bank notes of 300l. each fell to the ground.

“ Do I live in fairy land ! ” he exclaimed. “ Now who can this be ? It cannot be you ; it cannot be Mirabel ? It is wondrous strange.”

“ I think I can throw some light upon it,” said Lord Montfort. “ Katherine was mysteriously engaged with Glastonbury yesterday

morning. They were out together, and I know they went to her lawyer's. There is no doubt it is Katherine. I think, under the circumstances of the case, we need have no delicacy in availing ourselves of this fortunate remittance. It will at least save us time," said Lord Montfort, ringing the bell. "Send your master here directly," he continued to the waiter.

The sheriff's officer appeared; the debt, the fees, all were paid, and the discharge duly taken. Ferdinand in the meantime went up stairs to lock up his dressing case, the little waiter rushed after him to pack his portmanteau. Ferdinand did not forget his zealous friend, who whispered hope when all was black. The little waiter chuckled as he put his ten guineas in his pocket. "You see, Sir," he said, "I was quite right. Knewed your friends would stump down. Fancy a nob like you being sent to quod! Fiddle-dedee! You see, Sir, you weren't used to it."

And so Ferdinand Armine bid adieu to the spunging house, where, in the course of less than

eight and forty hours, he had known alike despair and rapture. Lord Montfort drove along with a gaiety unusual to him.

“Now, my dear Armine,” he said, “I am not a jot the less in love with Henrietta, than before. I love her as you love Katherine. What folly to marry a woman who was in love with another person! I should have made her miserable, when the great object of all my conduct was to make her happy. Now Katherine really loves me as much as Henrietta loves you. I have had this plan in my head for a long time. I calculated finely; I was convinced it was the only way to make us all happy. And now we shall all be related; we shall be constantly together; and we will be brother friends.”

“Ah! my dear Montfort,” said Ferdinand, “what will Mr. Temple say?”

“Leave him to me,” said Lord Montfort.

“I tremble,” said Ferdinand, “if it were possible to anticipate difficulties to-day.”

“I shall go to him at once,” said Lord

Montfort ; “ I am not fond of suspense myself, and now it is of no use. All will be right.”

“ I trust only to you,” said Ferdinand, “ for I am as proud as Temple. He dislikes me, and he is too rich for me to bow down to him.”

“ I take it upon myself,” said Lord Montfort. “ Mr. Temple is a calm, sensible man. You will laugh at me, but the truth is, with him it must be a matter of calculation : on the one hand, his daughter’s happiness, an union with a family second to none in blood, alliances, and territorial position, and only wanting his wealth to revive all its splendour ; on the other, his daughter broken-hearted, and a Duke for his son-in-law. Mr. Temple is too sensible a man to hesitate, particularly when I remove the greatest difficulty he must experience. Where shall I put you down? —Berkeley Square ? ”

CHAPTER XXII.

FERDINAND MEDITATES OVER HIS GOOD
FORTUNE.

IN moments of deep feeling, alike in sudden bursts of prosperity as in darker hours, man must be alone. It requires some self-communion to prepare ourselves for good fortune, as well as to encounter difficulty, and danger, and disgrace. This violent and triumphant revolution in his prospects and his fortunes, was hardly yet completely comprehended by our friend, Ferdinand Armine; and when he had left a note for the generous Mirabel, whose slumbers he would not disturb at this early hour, even with good news, he strolled along up Charles Street, and to the Park, in one of those wild and joyous reveries in which we brood over coming bliss, and create a thousand glorious consequences.

It was one of those soft summer mornings, which are so delightful in a great city. The sky was clear, the air was bland, the water sparkled in the sun, and the trees seemed doubly green and fresh to one who so recently had gazed only on iron bars. Ferdinand felt his freedom as well as his happiness. He seated himself on a bench and thought of Henrietta Temple; he took out her note, and read it over and over again. It was indeed her hand-writing! Restless with impending joy, he sauntered to the bridge, and leant over the balustrade, gazing on the waters in charmed and charming vacancy. How many incidents, how many characters, how many feelings flitted over his memory! Of what sweet and bitter experience did he not chew the cud! Four and twenty hours ago, and he deemed himself the most miserable and forlorn of human beings, and now all the blessings of the world seemed showered at his feet! A beautiful bride awaited him, whom he had loved with intense passion, and who, he had thought, but an hour ago, was

another's. A noble fortune, which would permit him to redeem his inheritance, and rank him among the richest commoners of the realm, was to be controlled by one, a few hours back, a prisoner for desperate debts. The most gifted individuals in the land emulated each other in proving which entertained for him the most sincere affection. What man in the world had friends like Ferdinand Armine? Ferdinand Armine, who, two days back, deemed himself alone in the world! The unswerving devotion of Glastonbury, the delicate affection of his sweet cousin, all the magnanimity of the high-souled Montfort, and the generosity of the accomplished Mirabel, passed before him, and wonderfully affected him. He could not flatter himself that he indeed merited such singular blessings; and yet with all his faults, which with him indeed were but the consequences of his fiery youth, Ferdinand had been faithful to Henrietta. His constancy to her was now rewarded. As for his friends, the future must prove his gratitude to them.

Ferdinand Armine had great tenderness of disposition, and somewhat of a meditative mind; schooled by adversity, there was little doubt that his coming career would justify his favourable destiny.

It was barely a year since he had returned from Malta—but what an eventful twelvemonth! Everything that had occurred previously, seemed of another life; all his experience was concentrated in that wonderful drama that had commenced at Bath, and the last scene of which was now approaching,—the characters, his parents, Glastonbury, Katherine, Henrietta, Lord Montfort, Count Mirabel, himself and — Mr. Temple!

Ah! that was a name that a little disturbed him; and yet he felt confidence now in Mirabel's prescience; he could not but believe that with time even Mr. Temple might be reconciled! It was at this moment that the sound of military music fell upon his ear; it recalled old days; parades and guards at Malta—times when he did not

know Henrietta Temple — times when, as it seemed to him now, he had never paused to think or moralise. That was a mad life. What a Neapolitan ball was his career then ! It was indeed dancing on a volcano. And now all had ended so happily ! Oh ! could it indeed be true ? Was it not all a dream of his own creation, while his eye had been fixed in abstraction on that bright and flowing river ? But then there was Henrietta's letter. He might be enchanted, but that was the talisman.

In the present unsettled, though hopeful state of affairs, Ferdinand would not go home. He was resolved to avoid any explanations until he heard from Lord Montfort. He shrank from seeing Glastonbury or his cousin. As for Henrietta, it seemed to him that he never could have heart to meet her again, unless they were alone. Count Mirabel was the only person to whom he could abandon his soul, and Count Mirabel was still in his first sleep.

So Ferdinand entered Kensington Gardens,

and walked in those rich glades and stately avenues. It seems to the writer of this history that the inhabitants of London are scarcely sufficiently sensible of the beauty of its environs. On every side the most charming retreats open to them, nor is there a metropolis in the world surrounded by so many rural villages, picturesque parks, and elegant casinos. With the exception of Constantinople, there is no city in the world that can for a moment enter into competition with it. For himself, though in his time something of a rambler, he is not ashamed in this respect to confess to a legitimate Cockney taste ; and for his part he does not know where life can flow on more pleasantly than in sight of Kensington Gardens, viewing the silver Thames winding by the bowers of Rosebank, or inhaling from its terraces the refined air of graceful Richmond.

In exactly ten minutes, it is in the power of every man to free himself from all the tumult of the world ; the pangs of love, the throbs of ambi-

tion, the wear and tear of play ; the recriminating boudoir, the conspiring club, the rattling hell ; and find himself in a sublime sylvan solitude superior to the cedars of Lebanon, and inferior only in extent to the chestnut forests of Anatolia. It is Kensington Gardens that is almost the only place that has realised his idea of the forests of Spenser and Ariosto. What a pity, that instead of a princess in distress we meet only a nursery maid ! But here is the fitting and convenient locality to brood over our thoughts ; to project the great and to achieve the happy. It is here that we should get our speeches by heart, invent our impromptus, muse over the caprices of our mistresses, destroy a cabinet, and save a nation.

About the time that Ferdinand directed his steps from these green retreats towards Berkeley Square, a servant summoned Miss Temple to her father.

“ Is papa alone ? ” inquired Miss Temple.

“ Only my Lord with him,” was the reply.

“ Is Lord Montfort here !” said Miss Temple, a little surprised.

“ My Lord has been with master these three hours,” said the servant.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FERDINAND RECEIVES THE MOST INTERESTING INVITATION TO DINNER EVER OFFERED TO HIM.

“Is not it wonderful?” said Ferdinand, when he had finished his history to Count Mirabel.

“Not the least,” said the Count, “I never knew any thing less surprising. ’Tis exactly what I said, ’tis the most natural termination in the world.”

“Ah! my dear Mirabel, you are a prophet! What a lucky fellow I am to have such a friend as you!”

“To be sure you are. Take some more coffee. What are you going to do with yourself?”

“I do not know what to do with myself. I really do not like to go anywhere until I have heard from Montfort. I think I shall go to my hotel.”

“I will drive you. It is now three o’clock.”

But just at this moment, Mr. Bevil called on the Count, and another hour disappeared. When they were fairly in the cabriolet, there were so many places to call at, and so many persons to see, that it was nearly six o’clock when they reached the hotel. Ferdinand ran up stairs to see if there were any letter from Lord Montfort. He found his Lordship’s card, and also Mr. Temple’s; they had called about half an hour ago; there was also a note. These were its contents:—

Grosvenor Square, Thursday.

My dear Captain Armine,

I have prepared myself with this note, as I fear I shall hardly be so fortunate as to find you at home. It is only very recently that I have

learnt from Henrietta that you were in London, and I much regret to hear that you have been so great an invalid. It is so long since we met, that I hope you will dine with us to-day; and indeed I am so very anxious to see you, that I trust, if you have unfortunately made any other engagement, that you may yet contrive to gratify my request. It is merely a family party; you will only meet our friends from St. James's Square, and your own circle in Brook Street. I have asked no one else, save old lady Bellair, and your friend Count Mirabel; and Henrietta is so anxious to secure his presence, that I shall be greatly obliged by your exerting your influence to induce him to accompany you, as I fear there is little hope of finding him free.

Henrietta joins with me in kindest regards; and I beg you to believe me,

My dear Captain Armine,

Most cordially yours,

PELHAM TEMPLE.

“Well, what is the matter?” said the Count, when Ferdinand returned to the cabriolet, with the note in his hand and looking very agitated.

“The strangest note!” said Ferdinand.

“Give it me,” said the Count. “Do you call that strange! ’Tis the most regular epistle I ever read; I expected it. ’Tis an excellent fellow, that Mr. Temple; I will certainly dine with him, and send an excuse to that old Castle-fyshe. A family party—all right; and he asks me—that is very proper. I should not wonder if it ended by my being your trustee, or your executor, or your first child’s godfather. Ah! that good Temple is a very sensible man. I told you I would settle this business for you. You should hear me talk to that good Temple. I open his mind. A family party; it will be amusing! I would not miss it for a thousand pounds. Besides, I must go to take care of you, for you will be committing all sorts of *bêtises*. I will give you one turn in the Park. Jump in, *mon enfant*. Good Armine, excellent

fellow, jump in ! You see I was right ; I am always right. But I will confess to you a secret —I never was so right as I have been in the present case. 'Tis the best business that ever was !”

CHAPTER XXIV.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE PARTY, AND ITS RESULT.

IN spite of the Count Mirabel's inspiring companionship, it must be confessed that Ferdinand's heart failed him when he entered Mr. Temple's house. Indeed, had it not been for the encouragement and jolly raillery of his light-hearted friend, it is not quite clear that he would have succeeded in ascending the staircase. A mist came over his vision as he entered the room ; various forms, indeed, glanced before him, but he could distinguish none. He felt so embarrassed, that he was absolutely miserable. It was Mr. Temple's hand that he found he had hold of ; the calm demeanour and bland tones of that gentleman somewhat re-assured him. Mr. Temple was very cordial, and Count Mirabel

hovered about Ferdinand, and covered his confusion. Then he recognised the Duchess and his mother; they were sitting together, and he went up and saluted them. He dared not look round for the lady of the house. Lady Bellair was talking to his father. At last he heard his name called by the Count.

“*Armine, mon cher, see this beautiful work!*” and Ferdinand advanced, or rather staggered, to a window where stood the Count before a group, and in a minute he clasped the hand of Henrietta Temple. He could not speak. Katherine was sitting by her, and Lord Montfort standing behind her chair. But Count Mirabel never ceased talking, and with so much art and tact, that in a few moments he had succeeded in producing comparative ease on all sides.

“I am so glad that you have come to-day,” said Henrietta. Her eyes sparkled with a strange meaning, and then she suddenly withdrew her gaze. The rose of her cheek alternately glowed and faded. It was, indeed, a

moment of great embarrassment, and afterwards they often talked of it.

Dinner, however, was soon announced as served, for Mirabel and Ferdinand had purposely arrived at the last moment. As the Duke advanced to offer his arm to Miss Temple, Henrietta presented Ferdinand with a flower, as if to console him for the separation. It was a round table ; the Duchess and Lady Bellair sat on each side of Mr. Temple, the Duke on the right hand of Miss Temple ; where there were so many members of the same family, it was difficult to arrange the guests. Ferdinand held back, when Count Mirabel, who had secured a seat by Henrietta, beckoned to Ferdinand, and saying that Lady Bellair wished him to sit next to her, pushed Ferdinand, as he himself walked away, into the vacated seat. Henrietta caught the Count's eye as he moved off ; it was a very laughing eye.

“ I am glad you sit next to me,” said Lady Bellair to the Count ; “ because you are famous.

I love famous people, and you are very famous. Why don't you come and see me? Now I have caught you at last, and you shall come and dine with me the 7th, 8th, or 9th of next month; I have dinner parties every day. You shall dine with me on the 8th, for then Lady Frederick dines with me, and she will taste you. You shall sit next to Lady Frederick, and mind you flirt with her. I wonder if you are as amusing as your grandfather. I remember dancing a minuet with him at Versailles seventy years ago."

"It is well recollected in the family," said the Count.

"Ah! you rogue!," said the little Lady, chuckling, "you lie! I like a lie sometimes," she resumed, "but then it must be a good one. Do you know, I only say it to you, but I am half afraid lies are more amusing than truth."

"Naturally," said the Count, "because truth must in general be commonplace, or it would not be true."

In the meantime Ferdinand was seated next

to Henrietta Temple. He might be excused for feeling a little bewildered. Indeed, the wonderful events of the last four and twenty hours were enough to deprive any one of a complete command over his senses. What marvel then that he nearly carved his soup, almost eat his fish with a spoon, and drank water instead of wine ! In fact, he was labouring under a degree of nervous excitement, which rendered it quite impossible for him to observe the proprieties of life. The presence of all these persons was insupportable to him. Five minutes alone with her in the woods of Ducie, and he would have felt quite re-assured. Miss Temple rather avoided his glance ! She was, in truth, as agitated as himself, and talked almost entirely to the Duke ; yet sometimes she tried to address him, and say kind things. She called him Ferdinand ; that was quite sufficient to make him very happy, although he felt very awkward. He had been seated some minutes before he observed that Glastonbury was next to him.

“I am so nervous, dear Glastonbury,” said Ferdinand, “that I do not think I shall be able to remain in the room.”

“I have heard something,” said Glastonbury, with a smile, “that makes me quite bold.”

“I cannot help fancying that it is all enchantment,” said Ferdinand.

“There is no wonder, my dear boy, that you are enchanted,” said Glastonbury.

“Ferdinand,” said Miss Temple, in a low voice, “Papa is taking wine with you.” Ferdinand looked up and caught Mr. Temple’s kind salute.

“That was a very fine horse you were riding to-day,” said Count Mirabel across the table to Miss Grandison.

“Is it not very pretty? It is Lord Montfort’s.”

“Lord Montfort’s!” thought Ferdinand, “How strange all this seems!”

“You were not of the riding party this morning,” said his Grace to Henrietta.

“ I have not been very well this day or two,” said Miss Temple.

“ Well, I think you are looking particularly well to-day,” replied the Duke. “ What say you, Captain Armine ? ”

Ferdinand blushed, and looked very confused at this appeal, and muttered some contradictory compliments.

“ Oh ! I am very well now,” said Miss Temple.

“ You must come and dine with me,” said Lady Bellair, to Count Mirabel, “ because you talk well across a table. I want a man who talks well across a table. So few can do it without bellowing. I think you do it very well.”

“ Naturally ; ” replied the Count. “ If I did not do it well, I should not do it at all.”

“ Ah ! you are very audacious,” said the old lady. “ I like a little impudence. It is better to be impudent than to be servile.”

“ Mankind are generally both,” said the Count.

“ I think they are,” said the old lady. “ Pray is the old Duke of Thingabob alive ? You know whom I mean : he was an emigré, and a relation of yours.”

“ De Crillon. He is dead, and his son too.”

“ He was a great talker,” said Lady Bellair ; “ but, then, he was the tyrant of conversation. Now, men were made to listen, as well as to talk.”

“ Without doubt,” said the Count ; “ for Nature has given us two ears, but only one mouth.”

“ You said that we might all be very happy,” whispered Lord Montfort to Miss Grandison. “ What think you—have we succeeded ?”

“ I think we all look very confused,” said Miss Grandison. “ What a fortunate idea it was, inviting Lady Bellair and the Count ! They never could look confused.”

“ Watch Henrietta,” said Lord Montfort.

“ It is not fair ; how silent Ferdinand is !”

“Yes, he is not quite sure whether he is Christopher Sly or not,” said Lord Montfort. “What a fine embarrassment you have contrived, Miss Grandison !”

“Nay, Digby, you were the author of it. I cannot help thinking of your interview with Mr. Temple. You were prompt !”

“Why, I can be patient, fair Katherine,” said Lord Montfort ; “but in the present instance I shrank from suspense, more, however, for others than myself. It certainly was a very singular interview.”

“And were you not very nervous ?”

“Why, no : I felt convinced that the interview could only have one result. I thought of your memorable words ; I felt I was doing what you wished, and that I was making all of us happy. However, all honour be to Mr. Temple ! He has proved himself a man of sense.”

As the dinner proceeded, there was an attempt on all sides to be gay. Count Mirabel talked a great deal, and Lady Bellair laughed at what he

said, and maintained her reputation for repartee. Her Ladyship had been for a long time anxious to seize hold of her gay neighbour, and it was very evident that he was quite "a favourite." Even Ferdinand grew a little more at his ease. He ventured to relieve the Duke from some of his labours, and carve for Miss Temple.

"What do you think of our family party?" said Henrietta to Ferdinand, in a low voice.

"I can think only of one thing," said Ferdinand.

"I am so nervous," she continued, "that it seems to me I shall every minute give a scream and leave the room."

"I feel exactly the same; I am stupified."

"Talk to Mr. Glastonbury; drink wine, and talk. Look, look at your mother; she is watching us. She is dying to speak to you, and so is some one else."

At length the ladies withdrew, Ferdinand attended them to the door of the dining-room. Lady Bellair shook her fan at him, but said no-

thing. He pressed his mother's hand. "Good bye, cousin Ferdinand," said Miss Grandison in a laughing tone. Henrietta smiled upon him as she passed by. It was, indeed, a speaking glance, and touched her heart. The gentlemen remained behind much longer than was the custom in Mr. Temple's establishment. Everybody seemed resolved to drink a great deal of wine, and Mr. Temple always addressed himself to Ferdinand, if anything were required, in a manner which seemed to recognise his responsible position in the family.

Anxious as Ferdinand was to escape to the drawing-room, he could not venture on the step. He longed to speak to Glastonbury on the subject which engrossed his thoughts, but he had not courage. Never did a man, who really believed himself the happiest and most fortunate person in the world, ever feel more awkward and more embarrassed. Was his father aware of what had occurred? He could not decide. Apparently Henrietta imagined that his mother

did, by the observation which she had made at dinner. Then his father must be conscious of everything. Katherine must have told all. Were Lord Montfort's family in the secret? But what use were these perplexing inquiries? It was certain that Henrietta was to be his bride, and that Mr. Temple had sanctioned their alliance. There could be no doubt of that, or why was he there?

At length the gentlemen rose, and Ferdinand once more beheld Henrietta Temple. As he entered, she was crossing the room with some music in her hand, she was a moment alone. He stopped, he would have spoken, but his lips would not move.

"Well," she said, "are you happy?"

"My head wanders. Assure me that it is all true," he murmured, in an agitated voice.

"It is all true ;—there, go and speak to Lady Armine. I am as nervous as you are."

Ferdinand seated himself by his mother.

“ Well, Ferdinand,” she said, “ I have heard very wonderful things.”

“ And I hope they have made you very happy, mother ? ”

“ I should, indeed, be both unreasonable and ungrateful if they did not ; but I confess to you, my dear child, I am even as much astonished as gratified.”

“ And my father, he knows every thing ? ”

“ Everything. But we have heard it only from Lord Montfort and Katherine. We have had no communication with any one else. And we meet here to-day in this extraordinary manner, and but for them we should be completely in the dark.”

“ And the Duchess, do they know all ? ”

“ I conclude so.”

“ ’Tis very strange, is it not ? ”

“ I am quite bewildered.”

“ O mother ! is she not beautiful ? Do you not love her ? Shall we not all be the happiest family in the world ? ”

“I think we ought to be, dear Ferdinand. But I have not recovered from my astonishment. Ah! my child, why did you not tell me when you were ill?”

“Is it not for the best that affairs should have taken the course they have done? But you must blame Kate as well as me; dear, dear Kate.”

“I think of her,” said Lady Armine, “I hope Kate will be happy.”

“She must be, dear mother; only think what an excellent person is Lord Montfort.”

“He is indeed an excellent person,” said Lady Armine, “but if I had been engaged to you, Ferdinand, and it ended by my marrying Lord Montfort, I should be very disappointed.”

“The Duchess would be of a different opinion,” said Ferdinand, smiling.

Lady Bellair, who was sitting on a sofa opposite, and had hitherto been conversing with her Grace, who had now quitted her and joined the musicians, began shaking her fan at Ferdi-

nand in a manner which signified her extreme desire that he should approach her.

“Well, Lady Bellair,” said Ferdinand, seating himself by her side.

“I am in the secret, you know,” said her Ladyship.

“What secret, Lady Bellair?”

“Ah! you will not commit yourself. Well, I like discretion. I have always seen it from the first. No one has worked for you as I have. I like true love, and I have left her all my china in my will.”

“I am sure the legatee is very fortunate, whoever she may be.”

“Ah! you rogue, you know very well whom I mean. You are saucy: you never had a warmer friend than myself. I always admired you: you have a great many good qualities and a great many bad ones. You always were a little saucy. But I like a little spice of sauciness; I think it takes. I hear you are great friends with Count Thingabob—the Count, whose grandfather I

danced with seventy years ago. That is right ; always have distinguished friends. Never have fools for friends ; they are no use. I suppose he is in the secret too ? ”

“ Really, Lady Bellair, I am in no secret. You quite excite my curiosity.”

“ Well, I can’t get anything out of you, I see that. However, it all happened at my house, that can’t be denied. I tell you what I will do ; I will give you all a dinner, and then the world will be quite certain that I made the match.”

Lady Armine joined them, and Ferdinand seized the opportunity of effecting his escape to the piano.

“ I suppose Henrietta has found her voice again, now,” whispered Katherine to her cousin.

“ Dear Katherine, really if you are so malicious, I shall punish you,” said Ferdinand.

“ Well, the comedy is nearly concluded. We shall soon join hands, and the curtain will drop.”

“ And I hope, in your opinion, not an unsuccessful performance ? ”

“Why I certainly cannot quarrel with the catastrophe,” said Miss Grandison.

In the meantime the Count Mirabel had obtained possession of Mr. Temple, and lost no opportunity of confirming every favourable view which that gentleman had been influenced by Lord Montfort to take of Ferdinand and his conduct. Mr. Temple was quite convinced that his daughter must be very happy, and that the alliance, on the whole, would be productive of every satisfaction that he had ever anticipated.

The evening drew on; carriages were announced; guests retired; Ferdinand lingered; Mr. Temple was ushering Lady Bellair, the last guest, to her carriage; Ferdinand and Henrietta were alone. They looked at each other, their eyes met at the same moment, there was but one mode of satisfactorily terminating their mutual embarrassments—they sprang into each others’ arms. Ah! that was a moment of rapture, sweet, thrilling, rapid! There was no need of words, their souls vaulted over all petty explanations;

upon her lips, her choice and trembling lips, he sealed his gratitude and his devotion.

The sound of footsteps was heard, the agitated Henrietta made her escape by an opposite entrance. Mr. Temple returned, he met Captain Armine with his hat, and inquired whether Henrietta had retired ; and when Ferdinand answered in the affirmative, wished him good night, and begged him to breakfast with them to-morrow.

CHAPTER XXV.

WHICH, THOUGH FINAL, IT IS HOPED WILL
PROVE SATISFACTORY.

OUR kind reader will easily comprehend that from the happy day we have just noticed, Ferdinand Armine was seldom absent from Grosvenor Square, or from the society of Henrietta Temple. They both of them were so happy that they soon overcame any little embarrassment which their novel situation might first occasion them. In this effort, however, they were greatly encouraged by the very calm demeanour of Lord Montfort, and the very complacent carriage of his intended bride. The world wondered and whispered, marvelled and hinted, but nothing disturbed Lord Montfort, and Katherine had the skill to silence raillery. Although it was

settled that the respective marriages should take place as soon as possible, the settlements necessarily occasioned considerable delay. By the application of his funded property, and by a considerable charge upon his Yorkshire estates, Mr. Temple paid off all the mortgages on Armine, which, with a certain life-charge in his own favour, was settled in strict entail upon the issue of his daughter. A certain portion of the income was to be set aside annually to complete the castle, and until that edifice was ready to receive them, Ferdinand and Henrietta were to live with Mr. Temple, principally at Ducie, which Mr. Temple had now purchased.

In spite, however, of the lawyers, the eventful day at length arrived. Both happy couples were married at the same time and in the same place, and Glastonbury performed the ceremony. Lord and Lady Montfort immediately departed for a seat in Sussex, belonging to his father; Ferdinand and Henrietta repaired to Armine; while Sir Ratcliffe and his lady paid a visit to Mr.

Temple in Yorkshire, and Glastonbury found himself once more in his old quarters in Lancashire with the Duke and Duchess.

Once more at Armine ; wandering once more together in the old Pleasaunce—it was so strange and sweet, that both Ferdinand and Henrietta almost began to believe that it was well that the course of their true love had for a moment not run so smoothly as at present, and they felt that their adversity had rendered them even more sensible of their illimitable bliss. And the woods of Ducie, they were not forgotten ; nor least of all, the old farm house that had been his shelter. Certainly they were the happiest people that ever lived, and though some years have now passed since these events took place, custom has not sullied the brightness of their love. They have no cares now, and yet both have known enough of sorrow to make them rightly appreciate their unbroken and unbounded blessings.

When the honeymoon was fairly over, for they would neither of them bate a jot of this good

old-fashioned privilege, Sir Ratcliffe and Lady Armine returned to the Place, and Glastonbury to his tower ; while Mr. Temple joined them at Ducie, accompanied by Lord and Lady Montfort. The autumn also brought the Count Mirabel to slaughter the pheasants, gay, brilliant, careless, kind-hearted as ever. He has ever remained one of Ferdinand's most cherished friends—indeed I hardly think that there is any individual to whom Ferdinand is more attached. And after all, as the Count often observes, if it had not been for Ferdinand's scrapes they would not have known each other. Nor was Lord Catchimwhocan past over. Ferdinand Armine was not the man to neglect a friend or to forget a good service ; and he has conferred on that goodnatured, though somewhat improvident, young nobleman, more substantial kindness than the hospitality which is always cheerfully extended to him. When Ferdinand repaid Mr. Bond Sharpe his fifteen hundred pounds, he took care that interest should appear in the shape of a golden vase, which is

now not the least gorgeous ornament of that worthy's splendid sideboard. The deer have appeared too again in the park of Armine, and many a haunch smokes on the epicurean table of Cleveland Row.

Lady Bellair is as lively as ever, and bids fair to amuse society as long as the famous Countess of Desmond,

*“ Who lived to the age of a hundred and ten,
And died by a fall from a cherry tree then ;
What a frisky old girl ! ”*

In her annual progresses through the kingdom she never omits laying every establishment of the three families, in whose fortunes she was so unexpectedly mixed up, under contribution. As her Ladyship persists in asserting, and perhaps now really believes, that both matches were the result of her matrimonial craft, it would be the height of ingratitude if she ever could complain of the want of a hearty welcome.

In the daily increasing happiness of his beloved daughter, Mr. Temple has quite for-

gotten any little disappointment which he might once have felt at not having a duke for his son-in-law, and such a duke as his valued friend, Lord Montfort. But Ferdinand Armine is blessed with so sweet a temper, that it is impossible to live with him and not love him ; and the most cordial intimacy and confidence subsist between the father of Henrietta Temple, and his son-in-law. From the aspect of public affairs also, Mr. Temple, though he keeps this thought to himself, is inclined to believe that a coronet may yet grace the brow of his daughter, and that the barony of Armine may be revived. Soon after the passing of the memorable act of 1828, Lord Montfort became the representative of his native county, and a very active and influential member of the House of Commons. After the reform, Mr. Armine was also returned for a borough situated near the Duke's principal seat, and although Lord Montfort and Mr. Armine both adhere to the Whig politics of their families, they have both also, in

the most marked manner, abstained from voting on the appropriation clause; and there is little doubt that they will ultimately support that British and national administration which Providence has doubtless in store for these outraged and distracted realms. At least this is Mr. Temple's more than hope, who is also in the House, and acts entirely with Lord Stanley.

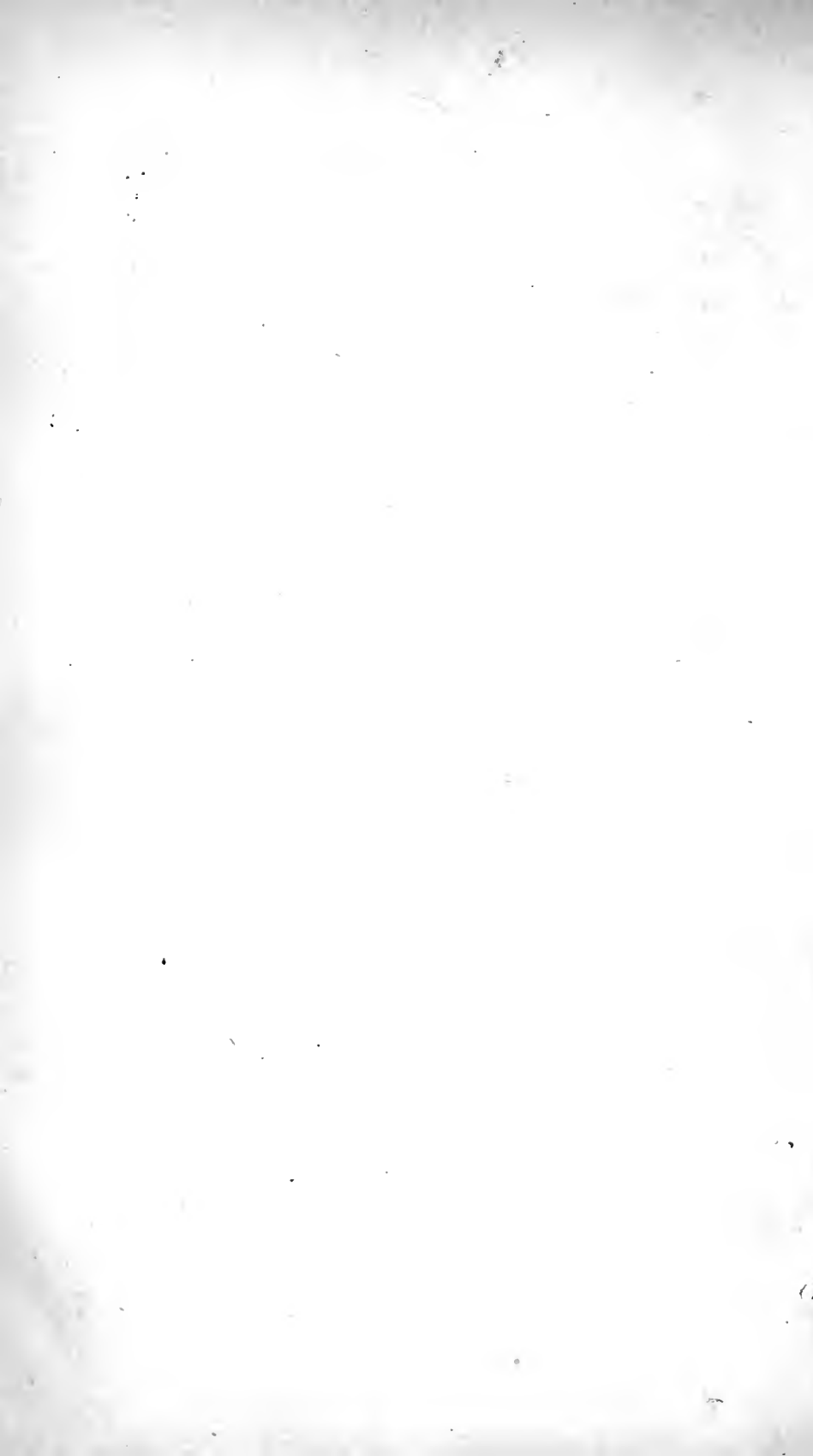
The Montforts and the younger Armines contrive, through mutual visits and a town residence during the session, to pass the greater part of their lives together; they both honestly confess that they are a little in love with each others' wives, but this only makes their society more agreeable. The family circle at Armine has been considerably increased of late; there is a very handsome young Armine who has been christened Glastonbury, a circumstance which repays the tenant of the tower for all his devotion, and this blending of his name and memory with the illustrious race that has so long occupied his thoughts and hopes is to him

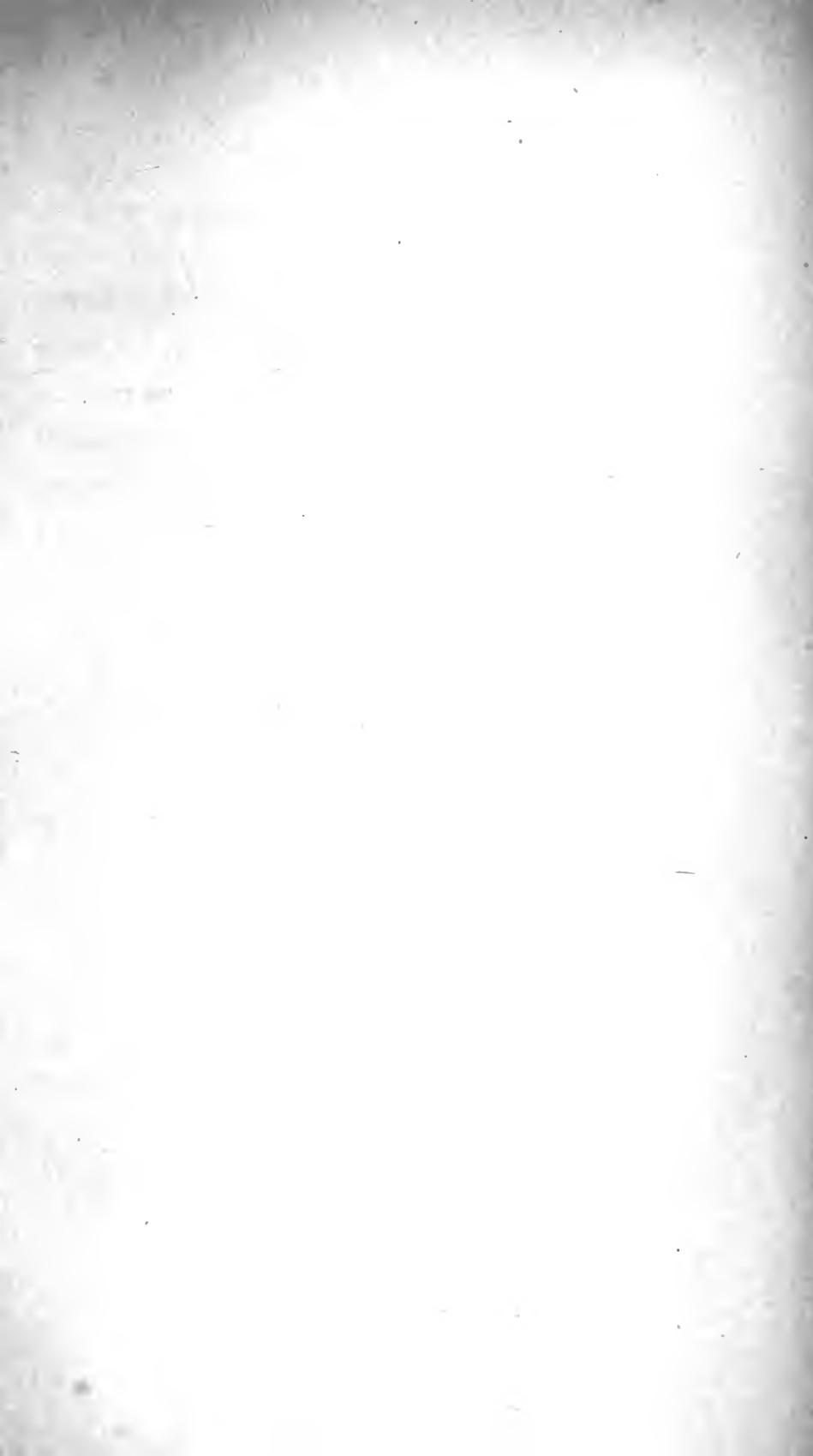
a source of constant self-congratulation. The future Sir Glastonbury has also two younger brothers quite worthy of the blood, Temple and Digby; and the most charming sister in the world, with large violet eyes and long dark lashes, who is still in arms, and who bears the hallowed name of Henrietta. And thus ends our LOVE STORY.

THE END

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